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OLD FAMILIAR FACES

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OLD FAMILIAR FACES

by

MEREDITH NICHOLSON, 1866–1947

Indianapolis

THE BOBBS-MERRILL COMPANY

Publishers

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To

CHARLES L. NICHOLSON

Riding deeper into the forest Ronald came upon a mean hut and hard by a graybeard, with painful labor, was cutting wood. "Ho, Ancient!" cried the youth blithely. "Why break thy back when the sun is hot and 'tis long until the time of snow?" The old man eyed him scornfully. "Folly has questioned," he retorted with asperity. "When thy locks are white then wilt thou know the answer."

—THE CHRONICLES OF TOOKIS.

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My attachments are all local, purely local. I have no passion (or have had none since I was in love, and then it was the spurious engendering of poetry & books) to groves and vallies. The rooms where I was born, the furniture which has been before my eyes all my life, a book case which has followed me about (like a faithful dog, only exceeding him in knowledge) wherever I have moved—old chairs, old tables, streets, squares, where I have sunned myself, my old school,—these are my mistresses. Have I not enough, without your mountains? . . .

—Charles Lamb; *letter to* William Wordsworth, *January 30, 1801*

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OLD FAMILIAR FACES

ONE'S GRANDFATHER

ONE'S GRANDFATHER

ONE'S relations are not to be paraded in public save in a worthy cause and the caption of these reflections is intentionally misleading—a convenience, a point of departure. What follows is discursive, tangential, the babble of a loquacious guest who changes the subject frequently for fear of losing the attention of the table. I am really thinking of family relationships in general, of orderly and happy households, of the simplicities and sanctities of life. Every well-regulated family should have a grandfather within call, to participate in all ceremonies and festivities and for his consolatory value in hours of adversity. My equipment in the way of grandfathers was complete: there were two of them. If they had created any great stir in the world I should be restrained by every consideration of delicacy from referring to them. It is because they never sought a place in the sun, but walked widely separated paths humbly and in the fear of God that I presume to invoke their spirits.

The older I grow the less I become interested in reports of supermen, in flares of precociousness and genius. It's the average man—an honest average,

with no juggling to make a pretty figure for the statistician—that we've got to adjust our ideals to. I throw in this most unoriginal note at this point to reassure those who might suspect that I was about to commit the indiscretion of boasting of my progenitors as extraordinary. On the contrary, my jubilation is rather that they were only average men, who were never inspired to set the world aright but adjusted themselves in good spirit to the state of life into which they were born, and so doing, led happy and contented lives.

Fathers are too close for detached observation; grandfathers are sufficiently remote to be viewed, as one might say, academically. I will go the length of urging the preservation and encouragement of grandfathers as essential to the proper safeguarding of our institutions. Of grandmothers I might say much, but grandfathers have somehow been neglected—their presence tolerated but not encouraged. But the aged are, in a manner of speaking, looking up. Science and the haberdasher are doing better than the poets ever did for the elderly man. No man of spirit who isn't afraid of a red necktie is going to become a lean and slippered pantaloon, slinking into seclusion when there's company in the parlor. The book counters are littered with plausible tracts that relate how old age may be postponed; no items of the daily news are more eagerly read than reports of the birthday celebrations of ancients

who sail toward the unknown as serenely as if they expected to cross the pole and sail southward into summer latitudes. This is good, and makes for a cheerfuller world.

It is not, however, my aim to repeat the familiar recommendation of a diet of spinach—that most uninteresting, insipid and depressing product of the vegetable kingdom—or suggest the adoption of any monstrous method of restraint or abstinence to those who covet earthly immortality. My intentions are social, not scientific. There are doctors in my bailiwick who view me with what I interpret as a certain commiserating professional glance when I meet them in the highway. I suspect them of speculating as to the pliability of my arteries, but I pass them with a disdainful lifting of the hand, remembering that both my grandfathers ate fried meat and lived comfortably into the nineties without knowing there was any such thing as blood pressure.

In their sorrowing over the deterioration of moral standards and the general subsidence of civilization in America the prophets of calamity do not neglect the family. We hear nowadays that the home as a social unit is enormously weakened where it is not already tottering, but it is far from my purpose to add the slightest weight to the pressure on the ancient walls. At the holiday season, when the heart kindles under the influence of gracious memories, and chimes are rung, candles lighted and good

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wishes exchanged among friends and strangers, it is possible to believe that many vestiges remain of what we are fond of calling the good old times. It might even be pointed out that the sentiment we associate with love and loyalty has still in our literature a tangible commercial value. The fundamental virtues may appear to the stern moralist to be much disfigured or obsolete, but wherever they are publicly exhibited they win the heartiest applause. Old stuff, chirrup the critics, when the mother puts the lamp in the window for the thousandth time in the hope that it may catch the eye of her wandering child. Truly enough, it is old stuff, but "safe"—safe because the world refuses to let go of it. There always has been that mother and that prodigal, and just as inevitably the lamp at the window—a pharos that lightens all the world's byways.

It follows that we must be cautious in accepting the conclusions of hasty and prejudiced observers as to human nature which doesn't change as to the fundamentals of right conduct half as fast as the pessimist would have us believe. Man has constantly been played upon by furious disturbances beyond his control, but as often as not he is saved in spite of himself by something inside of him that preserves him from annihilation. He may wander, he may stumble and fall, but Home remains his ultimate destination. The saving forces are not so unevenly matched in their battle with the powers of destruc-

tion. Rectitude and the loyalties go right on asserting themselves, planting fortifications which are capable of prolonged and stubborn resistance. And the family does persist and flourish, even when it abandons the front-yard grass and mother's pansy bed for the restricted area of an apartment where the flora is limited to an invalid rubber plant.

Irritating though they become at times, relatives are necessary and, save in regrettable instances where they may inconsiderately land themselves in the penitentiary, they do confer upon us a measure of dignity and respectability. I once heard of a man who was so upset by the constant invasion of his home by his wife's relatives that he would leave the table and retire to the parlor to swear. As he was a deeply religious person, the unwelcome guests, hearing his mutterings, attributed his absence to his desire for a few moments of private devotion. I introduce this incident to illustrate the value of a well-established reputation for piety in the family. A man who can be a hero to his wife's relations may face the rest of the world fearlessly; the calumniator's tongue is powerless against him; the purity of his soul would put Galahad to shame.

Any reorganization of society in such manner as to confide the newly-born to the care of the State would inevitably destroy the pleasant sentiment that has, for example, grown up about aunts and uncles. The State would not only become *in loco parentis,*

but it would be obliged to provide substitutes for those benevolent and understanding relatives who so adorn the best English fiction. An official uncle in the guise of a policeman or a species of universal aunt properly uniformed and badged might serve, though the idea is well calculated to shock those of us who recall aunts and uncles who appeared in the households of our youth as veritable angels and rubricated themselves in the book of memory. The spinster aunt walks among the stars in regal alpaca; romance clings to her like a breath of lavender; there is a reason why she weeps softly as she arrays her nieces in their wedding garments! The aunt with children fits quite as charmingly into those pictures we treasure, of households strange enough to touch the youthful visitor with a sense of adventure and yet having their indubitable relationship with Home. A very pretty piece could be written on "The Saintliness of Aunts," and "The Uncle in Literature" would be an inspiring theme for a thesis. Hamlet's ill-luck in the matter of uncles, and the dark tradition of the avuncular relationship left by the glowering Gloucester, merely suggest the possibilities of contrast with those genial and benevolent uncles who in classic pages are forever pinching their nephew's ears or tipping them with a sovereign.

My youth was blessed with an uncle who was as delightful as Major Pendennis. He was my ear

liest hero, superior to any I found in story-books. He wore his hat at a jaunty angle and swung his cane in the manner of one who met the world on something a little better than even terms. He was the kindliest and most generous soul I have known. No friend ever sank so low that he forgot or neglected him. One might have thought that he cultivated improvidence, so marked was his success in maintaining an empty pocket; it was nothing to him whether he had a dollar or not. His dollar was your dollar if he suspected a deficit in your private exchequer. His spacious manner implied the possession of millions, but he entertained no Mulberry Sellers' dream of sudden wealth. Money to him was solely a circulating medium. In his long and laborious life I doubt if he ever possessed at one time a thousand dollars above his liabilities. On an occasion when I was visiting his family his fortunes were low, and I recall the magnificent air with which he announced to my aunt and cousins his purchase of a vast quantity of smoked herring, a product of the salt, estranging sea with which he had previously been unfamiliar, but which, now that he had sampled it at the grocer's, he declared to possess the highest dietary value. He was dark to swarthiness and carried himself with soldierly erectness as became one who had been a captain of infantry in the War between the States. He looked important; he wore an authoritative air. He took

me to my first national political convention and passed the difficult doorkeeper merely by exhibiting his calling card, though he wasn't even a member of the party whose deliberations we invaded and his name to the guardian of the wicket meant nothing.

He began life as a printer, having learned the art in his father's (my maternal grandfather's) newspaper office in a small town in Eastern Indiana. Such honors as he attained at various times in his life (and two presidents bestowed offices of dignity and responsibility upon him out of sheer personal regard rather than as a reward for party service) never obscured for him the fact that he was a printer. And here I must be indulged to note my opinion that justice has never been done to those followers of the art preservative of all the arts who served the rigid apprenticeship of the old times and learned not only the craft but derived no mean education from their pondering of the matter they lifted from the copy hook. Through my family connections with printer's ink I knew great numbers of compositors of the old school. They were most scornful of the ignorance of editors and writers. The fact that I was the nephew of my uncle and the grandson of my grandfather was the happiest of introductions to many of the "prints" I encountered when I began newspaper work.

The picturesqueness of the composing room

passed with the invention of mechanical typesetting, which effectually disposed of those noble figures perched on their rickety stools, swaying to the click of the types, with "galluses" dangling, cob pipes in mouth and the most disreputable hats on their heads—by preference old straw hats which attained dignity from their very age. Intemperance was lamentably associated with the craft in those years; and this, coupled with the fact that a compositor could "get cases" for at least a day in any town where there was a printing office, was responsible for the tramp printer, who roved the country earning his way. My uncle's stories of his own pilgrimages immediately after the Civil War would make an enthralling narrative. It was the proudest boast of these peripatetic philosophers that they had "set" Greeley's notoriously puzzling copy on the *New York Tribune.* This was the highest possible achievement, the equivalent of an honorary degree in the craft. Often these men were widely read in the best literature. I knew one who had all Shakespeare at his tongue's end and was cursed with an ambition to play Hamlet. He did in fact appear, whenever occasion offered, as the tortured Dane in scenes from the play at lodge and church entertainments. My uncle told me of the perpetration by another of the fraternity of the most frightful pun I know. The scene was a barrel house in St. Louis much affected by knights of the

inky trades. One of a circle of philosophers that had been discussing weighty matters jumped down from a cask and tore his trousers. Gazing ruefully at the rupture he declaimed:

"See what a rent the envious Casca made!"

But dropping one's uncles, I shall register my opinion that he is a lucky child who enjoys the companionship of a grandfather through those years commonly believed to be impressionable. A grandfather does in a very impressive way make vivid the nearer past; he is an excellent substitute for a university of the broadest curriculum. The grandfather I knew best, from having lived under the same roof with him for many years, thrust back to Revolutionary times. His father, of Welsh origin, was born in Delaware, but was visiting an uncle in the West Indies when the minute men at Concord fired the shot heard round the world. He took ship for home and on the way the vessel was waylaid by a British man-o'-war, and in the fight he was wounded, but recovered and knew arduous service throughout the war. In his old age he received all the honors due one who had fought under Washington, as he sat in the tavern at Troy, Ohio, his last home, or received friends in his own house. Some of the letters he wrote in his last years show him to have wielded a vigorous quill. He signed himself in full—John Wheeler Meredith—a pardonable flourish in one who had

served his country well. The revolution seemed only a brief yesterday away as my grandfather visualized it for us children through his recollections of his father.

My grandfather was born in Pennsylvania and at proper age was bound out to a printer and, in the manner of those non-specializing days, learned the art in all its branches. He was the editor and publisher of a newspaper at Centerville, Indiana, when the California gold excitement shook the world. He became an argonaut, making the passage to the golden coast by way of the Isthmus, arriving at San Francisco on New Year's Day, 1850. Employment at his trade was not so easily found as he had imagined, but while he waited he did such odd jobs as offered, carrying parcels and the like until he found work in a printing office at seventy-five dollars a week. His battered pocket diary contains only meager hints of his adventures. He did not fail, however, to note his attendance at church on every Sunday of the year he spent in San Francisco. He never ventured into the gold-fields but, thoroughly homesick, returned to his Indiana newspaper. This whole episode was so unlike my subsequent knowledge of him that only the journal convinces me that he really entrusted himself to the belly of a ship and sailed the Pacific. The militant strain manifested in his father must have passed to another son, Joseph, of whom my grand-

father used to speak with the greatest admiration as a mighty hunter. This great-uncle was a restless person, who kept a little ahead of the westward movement of civilization that he might find game upon which to exercise his prowess with the rifle. Norval, another of my great-uncles, came less prominently into the domestic picture. My grandfather, who had a liking for sonorous phrases, in mentioning this brother never failed to quote:

> "My name is Norval; on the Grampian hills
> My father feeds his flocks." . . .

The profits, if any, from the *Wayne County Whig,* published in the 'forties, must have been inconsiderable. Those were the days when household essentials passed as cash in small communities. Files of the paper covering several years are preserved, and among the advertisements are frequent and urgent appeals to delinquent subscribers to replenish the editor's wood-pile.

When he removed to Indianapolis my grandfather purchased a home and resumed work as a journeyman printer. He had no eye for business; the property he bought was in a neighborhood doomed to deterioration; he put his savings in banks that failed. The collapse of a savings institution in which he had made deposits for his grandchildren was my first demonstration of the transi-

toriness of riches. No small item of my education was the discussion, round the base-burner in grandfather's house, of hard times, though I hardly knew the meaning of the words used, but realized that expenditures were to be cut and that certain privileges and indulgences dear to youth must be withdrawn. In 'seventy-three and again in 'eighty-four we experienced pinching times, but I have no recollection of any grumbling in our combined households. If one has never known affluence, the cutting off of an allowance of a quarter a week is not an unmitigated calamity.

A man who demanded little of life, this grandfather pursued the even tenor of his way untroubled by large ambitions. In nothing was he more amusing than in his small economies. The cutting of a string was painful to him; the threat of such wanton waste would evoke his protest, and he would take the package himself and patiently untie the knot. In those days when oysters were transported in oblong quart cans, he would take a shovelful of coals to the kitchen steps, soften the solder, and neatly remove the cap. As he had a weakness for oysters, he accumulated in the course of time a great number of these unmutilated receptacles in the vague expectation that one day some use would be found for them.

It is necessary to coin a word properly to describe my grandfather's diligence as a reader; he

was the readingest person I have ever known. I can see him now, in the low rocking chair that sufficed for his short compact body, his bald head glowing in the lamplight, his spectacles shining from a careful polishing with the scrap of chamois skin he carried in his pocket. He insisted on keeping at work at his trade long after he was seventy, and he would return with brisk step from the printing house, a basket in which he carried his lunch on one arm and a roll of journals and magazines under the other. While his prior claims would never have been disputed, it pleased him to place such literature as he could not immediately peruse under the red cushion of the rocker—the only sign of selfishness I recall in him. To see a newspaper flung down unfolded was offensive to him; he would painstakingly gather it up and restore it to order. The barn loft was filled with neat bundles of magazines and even of newspapers that covered some episode of recent history that interested him. His unadventurous shy nature delighted in romance. He was an assiduous reader of the *New York Ledger,* a journal so firmly planted in popular affection that it seemed as permanent a national institution as the Constitution itself. He introduced me to Cooper, but William Gilmore Simms was an author he appraised as hardly second to the creator of Leatherstocking. I wonder whether any one nowadays reads *Castle Dismal, Guy Rivers,* or

The Border Beagles! Late in life he discovered Felix Gras' *The Reds of the Midi,* a work he immediately wrote high on his list of favorites. He read a chapter in the Bible every night, and in his last years made it his habit to read the sacred writings through continuously, finishing Revelation only to begin all over again with Genesis. He was a walking concordance and could turn instantly to any passage that might be required. A faithful church attendant throughout his life, he kept a record in which he noted the weather, the text, the size of the congregation, with a line as to the quality of the sermon which, with characteristic amiability, he always pronounced good or splendid.

Great spirits trod the earth; kingdoms rose and fell in his day, and man's ingenuity devised many inventions which wrought immeasurable changes, but this kindly, patient, industrious man remained only an attentive spectator, reading the abstract and brief chronicles of his time with the zest with which he devoured a stirring tale.

My paternal grandfather opened vistas wholly alien to those to which my mother's father introduced me. He, like his father before him, was born in Kentucky, being of that Scotch-Irish strain that spread out from North Carolina and crossed the mountains to assist in the fashioning of new states in the western wilderness. I assume that he departed out of Kentucky for Illinois lured by the

promise of cheaper land and afflicted with that restlessness which caused great numbers of pioneers to keep ahead of the crowd. In this case the land was a soldier's grant to my great-grandfather for his participation in St. Clair's defeat.

This grandfather I remember as a stately old gentleman with a crown of fine-spun white hair. He was a farmer, as all his fathers had been (I am the first renegade of the tribe), and he made the black soil of his adopted state pay. He had the inbred fondness of all Kentuckians for a horse. At seventy in attempting to break a colt he fractured a leg, but recovered and enjoyed twenty-one years of comfortable life thereafter with only a slight limp as a reminder of his injury. He was much less communicative than my maternal grandfather, but with a little urging he would talk of the old home in Kentucky and of the pioneer experiences of his father, who had attained the age of ninety-seven. Cities were little to his taste, and when he visited us he spent most of the day in a park near our home, where he amused himself by quizzing me as to the names of the trees. On his farm, after he gave up active work, he was always abroad in fair weather. "Green things growing" never lost their charm for him. I used to be awed by his silence when he would pause abruptly in our walks and gaze meditatively across the fields. I never knew what his thoughts were at these moments, but it

pleases me to believe that lifelong association with the earth gave him, and probably gives all men of like kinship with the soil, clues to infinity that are denied the rest of us.

As I look back across the years its seems to me that the daily experiences of our household and what I learned, through the family tradition and experience, of history and of social and economic changes were a fair compensation for what I missed in the way of regular schooling. A prowling curious youngster, impartially following torchlight processions of both parties, and attending all public gatherings, I knew my home town thoroughly, saw the mighty put down from their seat and the humble and meek exalted, and was vaguely conscious at least that what I saw and heard was typical of the larger movement of life. The very tameness of these disclosures favors my contention that upon the home rests the main burden of educating the child. Curiosity, an intelligent alert curiosity, is essential to the acquisition of knowledge, and nowhere is this so naturally awakened as in the household. A child is much likelier to be interested in something he hears than in what he is bidden to read; and I doubt whether in all America there is a family that has not some link with history, or some traditions, that are likely to pique the curiosity of the young mind. It is the business of parents to make themselves interesting

to their children—to implant in them the idea that the world is a mighty interesting place, and that their chance of happiness is increased in ratio to what they see and hear and absorb.

To be sure, there are perplexities, not to say embarrassments, in following this formula. It is difficult to thrill a child with stories of what used to be when to-day's events are so exciting. They are likely to think their grandfathers rather foolish to have suffered peril and hardship in the wilderness when by waiting a little they could have accomplished the pioneering adventure so much more comfortably! The son I once conducted to Concord, Saratoga and Ticonderoga was only mildly thrilled by the contemplation of those scenes of battles long ago. He was impatient to reach Montreal and explore the offerings of the celluloid drama in that metropolis. Wolfe and Montcalm touched him less in storied Quebec than the discovery of a band of enthralling jazziness. And yet, as he has to live in the Twentieth Century, it is possible that he was not so benighted in his preferences. And I enjoyed the band!

The increasing burdens laid upon the public-school teacher, who must communicate knowledge according to a system that is subject to frequent change, and at the same time inspire and discipline a collection of utterly dissimilar youngsters, would be enormously lightened if parents met their re-

sponsibilities with intelligence. A decline in courtesy in these free American states is frequently complained of by sensitive persons who resent boorishness, particularly in public servants. It is a dreadful thing indeed to be insulted by an elevator-boy or made the target of contumely by the admiral of a trolley-car. The well-mannered child is its parents' best advertisement.

Once I happened to be in Columbia and visited a cemetery where many of South Carolina's illustrious dead are buried. I found a venerable negro at work on the lot of the Hamptons, and he answered my questions with a charming quaint courtesy. He had followed General Wade Hampton's fortunes through the Civil War, and was still a retainer of the family. This former slave spoke of his own children with a touching pride. The rearing of children was evidently a matter to which he had given serious thought and reduced to a concise formula which he elucidated for my benefit as he leaned on his rake among the dead cavaliers.

Manners come first, he said, then morals, and then learning; but manners, he gravely insisted, should head the list. I left him with a feeling that I had conversed with a gentleman who was also a sound philosopher, and as his words have remained with me for twenty years, I shall allow them to close the argument.

THE OLDEST CASE ON THE CALENDAR

THE OLDEST CASE ON THE CALENDAR

ABOUT the time we close the doors and turn on the radiator, it is possible to approach closer to our real selves than in summer. Even at its happiest, summer, with its wide vistas, offers too many distractions; it is far too easy to watch the world go by without really seeing it. Four walls, on the other hand, compel concentration. Questions which in midsummer we view languidly or in a spirit of irritation induced by the heat, may be contemplated with philosophic calm when the north wind rides hard and fast and cheerily rattles the shutter. But be not deceived. I have no intention of adding to the pyramid of literature bearing upon the respective merits of Winter and Summer. By these commonplaces I am merely negotiating a cautious approach to graver matters, hoping to establish myself with the reader on terms of our common humanity.

Having heard during the summer much discussion of the changing order, most of it depressingly pessimistic, I am disposed to take advantage of a quiet evening at home to ponder these things yet again. The case of Age *versus* Youth is one of the oldest on the calendar of the Court of Time;

it is perennially *lis pendens,* never attaining the dignity of *res judicata.* Nor will it ever be disposed of and final judgment rendered until Time itself shall cease to be; but it adds to the joy of existence for successive generations to dally with the case, bring it to an issue with a fine flourish of sincerity only to find that the plaintiff's witnesses have passed beyond reach of the sheriff's writ, whereupon the original defendant, tottering to the court-house, commits the folly of instituting a proceeding *de novo* against a new crop of Youth.

Time, placidly perched on the bench, must be highly entertained and not a little amused that a case which manifestly never can reach a final decree should reappear upon the docket as each new generation begins to assert itself. What really is the gravamen of the ancient complaint? Is the oft-renewed indictment meritorious, and is it supported by competent evidence? Frankly, my sympathies are wholly with Youth, the mystified yet smiling defendant; and, as the plaintiffs are so prone to default or show themselves absurdly unreasonable and violent when they dash in to amend the ancient complaint or to ask postponement of the hearing, I am disposed to change the monotonous routine by invoking an extraordinary process to compel the complainants to appear at the bar forthwith and unfold themselves as to the exact nature of the relief they demand.

Just what is it that those who are so filled with forebodings as to the present and immediately succeeding generations would like restored of what has passed or is passing? A demand for a concrete and definite expression from those who profess to believe that yesterday was a time of nobler aspirations and achievements than to-day would at least lay the burden of proof upon the complainant.

The vanity of age is a curious thing. As we approach fifty most of us who have survived plague, pestilence and famine, wars, panics, and the other perils that flesh is heir to, begin to hark back to the good old times when everything was different. Because things were different we foster the delusion that everything was better. We expect youngsters to listen with rapt attention to our reminiscences. I confess that I myself find it necessary to fight constantly a tendency to corner some helpless youngster and describe to him the old statehouse, or the union station as it used to be in the good old times before the tracks were elevated and the mortality list lowered. Or, in a mood of condescension, I speak of that glorious year when our town figured in the schedules of the National League. Baseball, I intimate, reached perihelion in that year of wonder. When I speak of Kelly and Clarkson and other giants of those days and their visits to our capital, or recall Jack Glasscock as the

most efficient and captivating short stop the diamond has ever known, he merely smiles sadly; and if I continue he may be driven to ask my opinion of Babe Ruth and other luminaries of the degenerate present. There have been great men since Agamemnon, and we needn't imagine that the youth of today are not aware of the fact. Sufficient unto the day are the heroes thereof.

Youth should be protected by law from the reminiscence of its elders. Pleasant as it is for me to recall that where factories now grace the river bank I, with my young comrades, once fashioned a boat out of a sycamore log with which to seek the enchanted isles, there is, after all, no particular reason why I should bore the new generation with such recollections. The fact that the argosy stranded on a sand-bar within an hour after it was launched and was abandoned makes against the success of such a narrative with present-day youth. The incident is one of failure, and in these clanging times it is a grave blunder for any parent, guardian, or elderly neighbor to confess failure to the luckless child who is snared in the meshes of such reminiscences. I seem to recall that similar scraps of autobiography related by my father and grandfather struck me as rather foolish. The joke of going 'coon hunting and not getting the 'coon may tickle the man who remembers the joy of the hunt, but the humor of it is lost on the boy who is

disappointed that the quarry escaped. Such revelations are dangerous; a man must, if possible, be a hero to his children. Again, it is too much to expect that young people will be thrilled by accounts of their elders' hardships in fighting through snowdrifts breast high to reach the little red schoolhouse—an institution too remote for visualization by children who know that nowadays country scholars are borne at the public expense in motor busses to substantial brick buildings filled with all the modern apparatus of education. But I must have a care! Of course there never was any such efficient teaching as that provided at the little red, or the old log, schoolhouse where nothing was taught but the three R's, and corporal punishment was a feature of the day's routine. Children learned something in those glorious days or if they didn't they got a licking! The purpose of such reminiscences is to arouse the young to a realization and appreciation of their blessings. But, aside from teaching youth to be humble, which is always salutary, is there really much use in keeping alive the superstition that the educational methods of pioneer times were superior to those of to-day? It would be difficult to find support for a movement to restore those little red, or old log, schoolhouses to the landscape. There may be, here and there, some grizzled veteran whose thoughts turn backward bitterly to neglected opportunities or to an early

happiness not sustained with the years, who would like to punish the new generation for his failures as a member of the old; but this, fortunately, is impossible. We may think fondly of the old spring, but we seek the spot to find that change has been busy there, too; it is either obliterated or yields only brackish water.

It does not follow inevitably that, because I was required to chop kindling on Saturday morning, carry in the coal and carry out the ashes, the same service should be imposed on my boy when he knows that there is a man on the place who is paid to do such jobs. It is my business to devise other ways, in keeping with the changed order of things, to instill in him ideals of obedience and service. Invoking the spirit of early delights—and detestations—I remember that another of my functions as a boy was the care of a horse. I took considerable pride in the placid animal which, on Sunday afternoons, hauled the family to the cemetery—in those days the only park the town afforded—or to gather wild flowers or autumn leaves. The memory of those excursions does not thrill me. I certainly should rebel at being obliged to repeat them. The weekly reminder of man's mortality was depressing, and I was always skeptical as to the decorative value of the native flora when transferred to the center table or of boughs of dying leaves, feloniously acquired, and boldly

borne home to be hung over the mantel behind the base-burner in the sitting-room.

The boy who can take an automobile to pieces, repair it and put it together, can hardly be expected to express rapturous admiration when I tell him of my experiences as a hostler. My labors with the currycomb and brush and the cleaning of the stable do not establish me in his mind as a Herculean figure. To him the horse is all but negligible, a ridiculous beast bound for the museum of natural history and already confused in the young mind with the mastodon and the dinotherium. If pressed, I should be obliged to admit that an automobile is a far more delightful medium of transportation than the horse. Remembering the white glare of the tombstones in the cemetery and their doleful hint, not to say threat, of my own ultimate passing, I am not base enough to try to convince an intelligent wide-awake member of the rising generation that I would turn time backward if I could. The horse was once looked upon as an instrumentality of evil in making possible the escape of youth from the paternal eye. Not so long ago every farm boy commanded a colt and buggy with which to sally forth with his best girl. On quiet moonlit roads the passer-by was often conscious that the horse required remarkably little attention from the driver. The consequences of this freedom were sometimes deplorable. In the day of its great popularity the bi-

cycle, too, was denounced as a contributing factor in immorality; it is not surprising that the automobile should be execrated for increasing an old danger. Morality must have been pretty unstable when the automobile appeared if gasoline can so quickly have become a menace to the chastity of the new generation. The sentries must have been dozing at their posts or they would have given warning. If the youth of these days have not the protection they once enjoyed it is not their fault. They didn't choose the time of their arrival or create the conditions into which they were born.

Odd, what a queer jumble of unimportant things stick in the memory! In winter my mother used to hang about my neck a red-flannel bag of asafetida to ward off infection. She believed in this as firmly as in the advisability of seeing the new moon over her right shoulder. The pervasive aroma of forty such amulets in an overheated schoolroom I recall to this day, but not with poignant regret for the passing of this superstition. Much as I enjoyed watching my maternal grandmother roll into her back yard every spring a huge iron pot in which she concocted soft soap from the winter's accumulation of fat, my recollection of the product is not so agreeable—the stuff was sometimes introduced into my ablutions—that I should care to impose its manufacture or use upon any child of these times. This grandmother was a Virginian, thor-

oughly skilled in the household arts, but I am constrained to think that in these days she would be very quick to accommodate herself to the changed conditions.

Speaking of grandmothers, I recall my astonishment the first time I discovered my paternal stepgrandmother taking a quiet pipe after supper. It was a clay pipe she affected and she seemed to find in it an infinite solace. I think of her often as she sat in the bricked area between the kitchen door of the farmhouse and the well, whiffing meditatively. There were members of the household who frowned upon this performance—hence the rocker behind the kitchen. I think she would smile if she knew that young women of the generation of her great-grandchildren create no disturbance by smoking a cigarette as they drive through town. My heart warms to old people—the number is growing, I think—who enjoy the comforts and amusements of modern life. I knew an old lady who caused her family much anxious concern because she exacted of her chauffeur a speed in contravention of all the ordinances in such cases made and provided.

I am not profoundly moved by the sighs of those who crave a return of the old simple times. For most of us, the simple life is satisfactory and sufficient only when it's the only life we know. We may pretend all we please to disapprove of the

modern machinery that makes for ease, but in our hearts we know that we want all the comfort we can get. If it hadn't been in the blood of the race to push against the horizons, to seek new shores and devise better ways of doing things, the history of the world wouldn't be a very jolly narrative. My mother, I am glad to remember, never lost her curiosity as to the passing show or her readiness to accept and adjust herself to changing conditions. By breakfast time she was always prepared to discuss the morning's news, and she could hear a boy calling an extra quicker than any one else in the house. I can't recall a time when she wasn't an ardent suffragist, and she took me to hear the early advocates of that cause. Nothing ever elated her more than the casting of her first ballot. Though she had seen Booth in his prime, she had, nevertheless, a heart for the latest musical comedy. She talked less of the past than any other person I have known, kept busy and developed new interests to the end. Life never grew stale on her hands.

There's no use in giving up the fight at the first frost. When we find the children slipping away, excluding us from their pleasures, it's time to let them understand that we're far from being ready for the scrap heap. The fact that children don't run to bring father's slippers as they used to doesn't mean anv lack of consideration for the par-

ent who has worked hard all day to support his family. I prefer to think the passing of this custom indicates a hope in the young mind that father hasn't yet reached the slippered age, but still has a stomach not wholly satisfied with warmed-over cabbage. Slippers are the symbol, the outward and visible sign of approaching senility. Father would be a lot better off if he forsook the old armchair and took the family to a movie. When my son looks in on me while I'm shaving and asks cheerfully, "How's the young hero feeling this morning?" I am flattered. He doesn't mean to be impudent; he is merely greeting me as though I were a comrade of his own age. I should certainly forfeit his confidence in my sense of humor if I put down the razor to tell him that in my youth children showed their parents more respect. I tried that for a year or two and it didn't work. My past is nothing to him; he finds the world as it is sufficient for all purposes, and if he can have the car this afternoon he'll be very much obliged!

If there is any vanity that is not only pardonable but to be encouraged, it is the vanity of wishing to appear young. There is no shame in fighting wrinkles or baldness, and one is entitled to be as whimsical as one pleases about the color of one's hair. I have observed that gentlemen aglow from a "facial" leave the barber shop with a springy step, and even if the youthful color induced by the

soothing massage lasts only an hour, they have at least proved the courage of their conviction that a man's no older than the barber and tailor can make him. I hold it to be highly creditable to a woman that she is alert to resist the first encroachment of age upon her countenance. It may even be questioned whether it isn't her duty as well as her privilege to cling to youth with all the energy she possesses. The mirror is a great consoler and heartener; it's really the inner spirit that she's renewing! The girl who in the crowded elevator or on the street candidly opens her vanity box, inspects her nose, and dabs it with powder is guilty of no high crime. The passion for looking our best in a world that judges us largely by appearances is as old as the first brook that mirrored the first face.

When the bob began to be fashionable I overheard two women who had reached the middle distance discussing in a street-car the edict of a department store against the new style. One of them expressed the strongest disapproval of the store's action. "Why shouldn't a girl bob her hair? I used to bang mine!" This brought back to me not only the day of the bang, but also of the bang intricately curled and pasted to the brow with quince-seed mucilage. While my opinion in these matters is not of international importance, or even likely to carry weight in my home town, I shall, without the slightest hesitation, register my belief

that the bob is, where related to the head of a pretty girl of proper age, the most decorative form of head-dress affected in my time. The bang always somehow suggested a scowl; one could not escape an apprehension that it might crawl down into the owner's eyes. But the bob has distinct pictorial value; it is certainly preferable by far to the ear-muff arrangement which struck me in its heyday as neither beautiful nor sanitary.

Must we be sad to be good? This question used to worry me in those years when the books in the Sunday-school library were my prescribed moral pabulum. The good children didn't seem to have much fun. Perhaps this was why I became an assiduous reader of five- and ten-cent novels and of weekly story papers that printed tales of gay buccaneers, and of wicked gangs of robbers and of Wild Bill and other frontier characters. I suppose that I read more trash than any other boy of my age in America. It did me no harm; at least I can't see that it did. As the hero was always kind and chivalrous toward the weak and unfortunate and managed to crawl out of his scrapes alive, those tales were much more to my liking than the Sunday-school fiction whose heroes were usually misunderstood or tubercular. The loft of my grandfather's barn was filled with bundles of early American magazines, and when my supply of dime dreadfuls ran low, in desperation I used to explore

them. They were full of sorrow. The poetry in particular was pitched in a low key; some one was always dead or about to die. If the bard addressed a lyric "To a Sleeping Babe," it was only to enumerate for the hapless infant the perils and sorrows of life with pleasant intimations that an early death would, in all likelihood, be a merciful solution of its problem. The offerings of Tin-Pan Alley at its worst are much more refreshing than a type of doleful ballad popular within my memory. Old love-letters and faded ribbons and locks of hair were the chief ingredients of these compositions. The tune was always mournful; it had to be to fit such words as these:

"In the little rosewood casket
That is sitting on the stand,
There's a package of old letters
Written by a cherished hand.

"Go and get them, won't you, sister?
And read them o'er to me;
Often I have tried to read them,
But for tears I could not see."

I'd rather listen to my neighbors' jazziest records all night than be obliged to hear one song of that school sung in the old prescribed manner with everybody in the room sniffling. Save for the oc-

casional revelations of the court room, we might well believe that love-letters are no longer written; certainly they are not preserved in rosewood caskets to any great extent. The telephone is a much more convenient medium than note-paper for expressing one's adoration, and it has the decided merit of respecting a confidence.

I am conscious at this point that the serious-minded reader is growing restless, setting me down as a frivolous or evasive person, prone to skate only on the safest ice; but nothing could be more unjust. In any speculations on this ancient subject of the old and the new, there are matters which obviously can not be ignored.

Would I restore and perpetuate, if it were in my power to do so, the old confident belief in the inerrancy of the Bible, the awe in which it was held by my parents or, more accurately, by my grandparents? Let us consider this a little.

We can not think of the Bible as we were taught to regard it, or of the church to which we marched as a matter of course every Sunday morning, without visualizing again the home, the pleasant social contacts of the church, and a thousand and one other associations of the family life. "The old home" derived a charm from the very closeness of its horizons. All this is in itself a kind of religion, built upon something fine and noble that we never quite lose; and it is creditable to us

that it does abide with us. I can see my grandfather now reverently lifting the time-worn Bible from the table to read a chapter before going to bed. My emotions, as I ponder his piety, his unquestioning belief, can not be otherwise than tender. Not for much fine gold would I have changed his faith. But what was sufficient for him has not sufficed for me. Brought up in a Christian household and possessing, perhaps, a little more than the average man's curiosity as to things spiritual, I can not honestly say that I should want my children to believe as he believed merely that they might enjoy his serenity of life or the peace and hope in which he died. What was possible for him and good for the health of his soul is inescapably bound up in precious memories of other times and other manners; but I could no more bring myself to attempt to persuade my children that hell-fire and brimstone would be the punishment for their sins than I should try to convince them that the world would be a better place if steam and electricity were abolished. Of all emotions fear is the most hateful, the last to be encouraged in the mind and heart of man. I heard sermons in my youth which I should not want my children to hear; or, if they heard them, I should be obliged to confess that I did not believe that the preachers had any true vision of spiritual things.

"The heart of a boy is God's spring-time,"

wrote Woodberry. In the heart of all youth there are hours of wistful wonder, when the spirit is open and receptive, curious as to the mystery out of which it has come. There can be hardly a child whose imagination is not touched by the alternation of seasons, who is not troubled by questions he dare not ask as to the beginning and end of things. Verily the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts, and their speculations and shy questionings are entitled to all respect. I like to believe that no child is born a materialist, but rather a poet and dreamer, and it is incumbent upon Age to give substance and direction to the young aspirations.

I beg not to be misunderstood as lending support to those who feel that Christianity has lost its power to touch the imagination and the conscience of mankind. I am rather of that considerable company who feel that its great work remains to be done, but that it must accommodate itself to the new necessities and the changed mood of the time. People have a way of visiting markets that offer wares they need. A merchant who tries to palm off last year's goods on wide-awake customers is bound to arouse their ire. Man's spiritual needs change as the years roll by. To set my back against the wall and say that what was good enough for my grandfather is good enough for his great grandchildren "isn't the answer." The soul is a delicate

instrument that can not perform its best service under conditions that cramp and stifle it. We are walking backward with our eyes shut when we try to persuade ourselves that eternal truth does not march onward with the genius of the race. A truth ceases to be eternal when it loses its vitality, its power to accommodate and adjust itself to conditions that have been changing since the earth emerged from chaos.

If, as to things spiritual, the passing generation is handing on to the new a torch with a feeble flame, almost as grievous is the faint light of the untrimmed and smoking lamp with which I should symbolize our attitude toward politics and government. Democracy is fundamentally a product of the spirit, or at least those of us who occasionally sit in the councils of the absurd idealists are fond of imagining this to be true. But, leaving this pleasing assumption and viewing the processes of government from a purely materialistic standpoint, I shrink from attempting to impress the young men and women now approaching voting age with the idea that we, their predecessors, have displayed any zeal or gained any noteworthy victory in the elevation of political standards. We love the flag, and under proper provocation will fight for it; and certainly the young men and women of America, at a time when they were the target of a withering fire, gave their critics a pretty hard jar by their

splendid response to the call of the bugle in 1917.

Just what we might have expected, of course! But I am thinking of patriotism in time of peace, of every-day politics, of the administration of the affairs of your city and mine, of the meek tolerance of incapacity and venality, of the sickly whine of the average citizen, when conditions are bad in his community, that he reckons they always were so and always will be. Young men are warned to keep out of politics because it's a dirty business; a good man is bound to pay dearly for trying to make things better. I am unable to see that the generation now turning its face to the setting sun has advanced the cause of good government in any degree that can be looked upon as an inspiration to the youth of to-day to take politics seriously, to strive for the highest realizations of democracy.

The quickening of the civic spirit in youth would, I think, assist greatly in stimulating the impulse of obedience, service and responsibility. The discussion of public questions at the family table would at least tend to relieve the children of the constant parental ragging for their evil tendencies and the uncheering reminder that "things were not so in my day." A mild inquiry from Tommy as to just what father has done to make America a safe place for American institutions would not be bad for father, who always votes his ticket straight, one way or the other, and complains

bitterly because the street he was taxed to pave a little while ago is again crying for repairs. If his party is responsible for the crooked job, the inquiries of Tommy and Lucy who, in spite of their follies, do manage to get something out of the civil-government course at the high school, may shake father's confidence in the superiority of his own generation.

We complain of the breaking down of parental discipline and the general lawlessness of youth in a day when the statute books of every state are littered with laws that are not enforced, and some of them patently are not enforceable. The Eighteenth Amendment and the laws supported by it have wrought an even greater mischief than the evil sought to be abolished. Such laws should never have been passed until the government had perfected a machinery for their enforcement. The fact that they are not enforced has had the effect of suggesting to the young that all laws are foolish and made to be broken. Temperance was making splendid headway when we undertook prohibition and attempted to do by an iron law what social and economic forces were winning by an appeal to reason. Mr. Hoover has referred to prohibition as "a noble experiment" and this, after ten years, is hardly more than an admirable example of damning with faint praise. Prohibition is an invasion of what Lord Moulton happily called "the domain of the

unenforceable." Some things in this life must be left to the individual's sense of right and instinctive desire to be orderly and decent. Where the instinct is weak there are ways of strengthening it. Boys who were protected under the license system by ordinances against selling to minors are now free to patronize the bootlegger. I have seen more young boys intoxicated in one year of prohibition than in all the previous years of my life. I have heard more talk about drink than I ever heard before, among people of all ages. Statistics as to the increased bank savings under prohibition, the reports of raids by Federal officers and local police do not weigh against the fact that in every part of the country with which I am at all familiar practically every sort of alcoholic beverage is procurable by any one who wants it.

No other laws have ever been so flagrantly violated as those passed to destroy the demon of rum. The boy who might and did in other times drink to satisfy his curiosity as to the taste and effect of beer, or who sneaked a drink from the decanter at home, now satisfies his adventurous spirit by meeting a bootlegger in an alley and buying a quart of spirits. It must be bewildering to the lad of to-day to find his father boasting of his luck in picking up just a few bottles of some rare stuff —something usually which he didn't care greatly about before the law forbade him to have it. If

it's "smart" for the father to circumvent the law, it's "smart" for the boy. If I were asked whether I should repeal the prohibitory laws and go back to the old system I should say yes, until there was some reason for believing that public sentiment had grown powerful enough to compel their enforcement. Here, I think, is one point at which the new generation may well hold a grievance against its elders, for merely giving a new and dangerous guise to an old temptation, not destroying it.

If I were writing in the farmhouse of my fathers, before a fire of logs that I had cut with my own hands and dragged over the snow, I might take up the quill and write an appeal to Youth to change its ways. But in an apartment house that doesn't at all resemble the old homestead, with the steam radiator purring softly, I couldn't do this without the rankest hypocrisy. My typewriter would be sure to buck if I made the attempt. Rather, I feel moved to address the young generation in some such words as these:

"Don't think badly of the world because we old folks have done so precious little to make it more just, more kind, more beautiful! We're mighty sorry for our failures, but we have every confidence that you will extend and strengthen the lines that we have advanced so little and defended so feebly. We've let a lot of chances slip by; we've lacked courage, we've compromised with truth;

we've played the hypocrite; we've realized poorly our obligations to our country and our duty to God. Clean out our accumulation of rubbish and begin all over again in your own fashion! Don't take us as an example, but as a warning. Remember all the time that we're right behind, bragging about you, calling to the tired veterans of the army to stand up and cheer for you. You're going to plant your flag on that peak yonder that we never dared attempt. 'Let's go!' be your slogan—and don't you dare look back!"

ARE WE A HAPPY PEOPLE?

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THE question wears an odd look. Idly scribbling it on the back of an envelope as a train bore me westward, I found myself uncomfortably disturbed by it. To inquire whether we of great, proud, free America are happy seemed an impudence, almost a profanation. I hastily scratched the question with a guilty sense that I had committed an indefensible treason against the peace and dignity of the United States. Long journeys compel intensive thinking, and I found myself pondering very soberly the question that had so insolently assailed me. From the car-window I noted the bright flag of the stars waving from schoolhouses, and church steeples pointing heavenward, and motor-cars dashing along highways between fields white for the harvest. I had made that same journey countless times but never before had I questioned the general joy of my fellow countrymen. Indeed, I had always experienced a certain satisfaction and elation of spirit in traveling anywhere in America. With such small talents as I possess, I had been a booster for the provinces, a defender of Main Street, and hardly less valiant

in upholding against despairing moral uplifters the felicities of Broadway when the lights are bright. In short, I had regarded myself as a pretty cheerful and sanguine specimen of the patriotic American, hastening home on occasion from other lands with a grateful sense that I was returning to God's country.

Are we then, really, a happy people? It was absurd that the question should impinge so sharply upon my consciousness. It haunted impudently the cellars of my subconsciousness while I slept, and I awoke to find that the initial question had so multiplied itself that a hundred little fiends in the shape of interrogation points were dancing mockingly through my head. Not since as an anemic and timorous boy I had worried myself far toward brain fever with speculations as to the primary cause of all things had I been so perturbed.

I summoned history to my aid as I went to the dining-car for breakfast. Broadly considered, happiness has been the main quest of mankind; the search for it is the burden of all history. To be sure, greed and vengeance have played their part, but even there the ruthless powers resorted to violence only because this was the only way they could be amused. Behind every resistance to tyranny and every faith that has touched the imagination of man, there has been the hope and the promise of felicity. Every important political idea has prom-

ised, more or less directly, greater happiness. Under the solemn pontifications of party platforms there is the assurance that if only the people will support a certain group of declarations the happiness of the nation will be enormously enhanced. Great numbers of people have, within easy memory, manifested their confidence in the idea that a dollar split in two would become, to all intents and purposes, two dollars. The incredulous—unhappy, because they couldn't believe this legerdemain possible—caused Mr. Bryan to be thrice defeated for the presidency. Even in a democracy it is impossible for all the people to be happy more than half the time. In my own state, the much-lettered Hoosier commonwealth, where there is no point of rest in politics, the minority finds joy only in the blunders and misfortunes of the majority. No victorious candidate is long permitted to strut in pride. By the time he has appointed the cuspidor cleaners and mop-slingers and otherwise attempted to satisfy his deserving fellow partizans, he finds himself the target of so much envy, hatred and malice that he derives no delight from his job. He is grieved to learn that he is a crook and a blackguard, and if he is a sensitive being he is likely to steal into his back yard at midnight and bury such ideals as he stupidly carried with him into politics.

My reflections upon history, ancient and mod-

ern, brought me up sharply against the Declaration of Independence. "Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" gave me momentary consolation, but I choked on that qualifying "pursuit." Why pursue a thing you are supposed to be born with and enjoy to the end of your days? I was sorry I had thought of the Declaration of Independence, particularly when it suggested the Constitution and the Amendments thereto, which ought to be, if they are not, a guarantee of happiness. When I tried to specify my bodily needs on the order blank I began to write, "Are we a happy people?"—when I really meant to set down coffee, ham and eggs. I wished to ask the efficient negro waiter whether he, as an American citizen, duly recognized as such in a pendant to the Constitution I was taught to revere, had realized the happiness to which he was entitled; but I refrained. I had not the heart to put the question, remembering that I, his Caucasian brother, had done, and probably, through sheer cowardice, would continue to do, precious little to widen his opportunities for attaining the happiness to be derived only from a sense of the justice and good will of one's neighbors. My appetite was so spoiled by the reflection that a man's eligibility for happiness can be determined by the chance of race or color that I felt like apologizing to the waiter for accepting his intelligent and courteous service.

Later in the day, as I passed through the dining-car and found the crew "getting a little harmony" as they reset the tables, I said to myself: These men, denied as they incontrovertibly are, anything beyond the mildest approximation of the guarantees of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, and viewed with distrust and animosity the minute they attempt to do anything nobler than contribute to the ease and comfort of the lordly white, nevertheless do find a certain happiness. As races have served other races in an apprenticeship, learning from their masters the arts that were in turn to serve them, so may the negro be biding his time until, developed in the hard school of servitude, he takes his place as one of the great world races and joy-rides in the chariots of Pharaoh.

But this was silly. I wondered whether the vicious banging of the car at Pittsburgh had not loosened a complex in my already erratic brain. But when I sought the club-car and looked down the aisle at the gloomy countenances of my fellow travelers, I questioned seriously whether the black men really haven't the best of it. Mirth and melody bubble in their souls, in spite of the fact that in certain areas of the republic they are effectually disfranchized and, in all others with which I enjoy familiarity, find themselves excluded as "damned niggers" from all places of popular assemblage—

even from places where members of their own race provide the entertainment! Man, I reflected, is not after all a reasoning animal, with a passion for generosity and justice; he is merely a prejudice on two legs.

It is always a disagreeable experience to find oneself a prey to doubt. We like to believe ourselves positive characters, firmly planted on solid Gibraltars of unassailable opinions deduced by sound reasoning. Once we begin pondering what we aim at and what we achieve in our national life, we find ourselves contemplating a declining barometer. Are we not, we who call ourselves American, filled with joy at the thought of our supremacy among the nations? Are there not, everywhere visible, incontrovertible evidences that we dwell together in a unity that is even as precious ointment upon the head or as the dew of Hermon and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion?

I do not find these evidences of happiness so insistently present as they should be if we are to be exhibited to the rest of the world as a sample of what democracy offers to mankind. We are by nature prone to experiment, and little affected by experience. Heirs of the wisdom of all the ages, we nevertheless catch at any new political device, comforting ourselves with the idea that there is something noble and courageous in the frequently

heard declaration that we are willing to try anything once. It would seem that in perfecting the machinery of government, in choosing administrators of public office of the highest talent, we should find the greatest pride. It might even be assumed that the ablest men we produce would accept positions of small honor and slight emolument, merely for the satisfaction to be derived from doing a job well. It can hardly be pretended that this is the case. Once let a man of the first rank present himself for an office, and he is the target for innumerable arrows. It has been my lot to know something of politics and to enjoy the acquaintance and sometimes the friendship of men who attained positions of dignity in their communities or in the nation, and their experiences have not been heartening to those who seek the best that can be got from popular government. Once I happened to call on a governor who had just been advised of the malfeasance of an important official in his own party. The culprit had been to see him and had begged on his knees for mercy. The governor, still shaken by the revelation, struck his fist upon his desk and exclaimed: "It was the ambition of my life to hold this office, but, by God, I'd be a happier man if I'd been defeated!"

Even on days when the skies are high and I take an optimistic view of the future of the nation, I am distressed by a certain grimness in the faces of

the people I encounter. Evidences of gaiety are hard to find. In the jazz and gin palaces of our cities it is astonishing how few of the patrons seem to be finding any joy in the proceedings. The men and women huddled about the tables look as if they had heard evil tidings, and when they address themselves to dancing it is with an air of determination, as though they had resigned themselves to a harsh fate and meant to go through with it if it killed them. The muse of comedy is hard put to awaken mirth in the theater. Now and then a satiric comedy scores a hit on the American stage, but, generally speaking, we prefer those entertainments with music where the comedy provided lays no heavy tax on the intelligence. The average theater audience seems to have sternly resolved to respond only with the greatest reluctance to the efforts of the players. There are funny films, of course, but one must usually suffer the untold agonies of a machine-made serious drama before the comedy relief is turned on. We have the greatest desire to be happy, but happiness is not, apparently, our inalienable heritage as children of democracy.

In a retrospective mood I wonder whether there are as many incentives to laughter these days as there were twenty-five years ago. Of one thing I am sure, and that is that in the typical American community where I have spent my life, humor is less evident than it used to be. There are fewer

wits and story-tellers in my town than formerly. I fear mine own Hoosier people do not laugh quite so readily as they once did. Perhaps the quicker pace of life and fear of a reprimand from the temperamental traffic cop kill mirth in the soul of the citizen who in other days halted you in the middle of the street to tell you a story. I find that representatives of the new generation look at me with grieved surprise when I attempt to describe the plays of Mr. Charles Hoyt. I am warned even by my contemporaries that those farces would fall flat if produced now; and after joyfully rushing to see the revivals of *Erminie* and *Floradora* I must admit that fashions in humor do change and that it is extremely hazardous to brag to the young about plays we once thought side-splittingly funny. I might revert also to a time not so remote when a considerable number of weekly journals presented the writings of widely quoted funny men who were national figures, subordinate of course to Mark Twain, from whom perhaps in some degree they derived their inspiration. Even in Congress there appeared occasionally a member who could make the country laugh for a day. But I know as well as another that the loud guffaw does not necessarily indicate true and abiding happiness.

It is the way of all who torture themselves by trying to solve the riddles of existence to seek the causes of real or imaginary perils, and I am not

without my weakness in this particular. If happiness is not everywhere present; if the atmosphere in which we live is not aquiver with joy I should be spattering ink in vain if I lacked the courage or fortitude to probe for the cause. It is a common habit to lay the blame for disturbed social conditions upon obvious and unimportant phenomena, and consequently much is written and said about the pernicious influence of our present-day amusements, the baneful effect of the automobile upon morality, the liberty enjoyed by a generation deprived of the old checks and safeguards.

There are no signs apparent of an abatement of the general restlessness. We have reached a point where the greatest of wars grows dim in the haze of distance, a monstrous thing, vast in its pathos, which many of us fear proved and established nothing, so unstable seem the hard-won gains. We were told at the beginning of the conflict that one of the compensations for its frightfulness was bound to be a joyful spiritual awakening, with a salutary effect upon all mankind. This did not, however, prove to be the case; at least I am unaware of any impressive and outstanding evidence of it in America or anywhere else in the world. Neither do I believe that to the war may justly be attributed the lowering of moral standards so generally complained of just now, or the lessening hold of religion upon the popular imagination. The be-

ginnings of these changes were evident to attentive observers long ago. But by indirection the greatest of wars is having its effect upon the spirit of man.

The stupid futility of a resort to violence in the settlement of disputes, as we bewilderedly reckon the cost of those red years, is troubling the consciences of men and of nations. If we are not seeking a nobler way of life with all the humility and earnestness that could be desired, nevertheless a great and increasing number of people are anxious to eliminate terror and bloodshed from the possibilities of the future. Every new device of torture and death binds us closer to the cave and the club. It is through material losses resulting from war rather than from the horror of war itself that we seem ready to make a tangential approach at least, to a purer vision of international relationships. Truly, man does not live by bread alone, and when the bread is hard to get he is quite likely to consider ways of escape from the forces and processes by which his plate was emptied.

We need not quarrel with the necessity which impels man to seek higher ground. Let it suffice that, from the fret and turmoil of our complex existence, there does in these days appear to issue a cry for help. Great numbers of people feel a need for something, not in themselves, that will serve as a refuge in dark hours.

Wistfully as I may hark back to the great names that were potent in my youth, I am aware that they never again can exercise their old spell. It has been hammered in upon us constantly that the intensive life is the great thing—"one crowded hour of glorious life"—far likelier to bring felicity than the more deliberate and assured building with the true materials of happiness. But I find myself fingering affectionately those old coins passed along by poor wights who really believed, in their respective periods, that the world was too much with them; that, frantically making and spending, men were laying waste their powers without hope of replenishment. We are all fearful of being caught with "old stuff" in our pockets. Reluctant as we may be to believe it, our century so far has been barren of prophets and bards endowed with the vision and the faculty divine. Instead of continuing this meditation in my own fashion, I feel strongly moved to conclude at once by appending a dozen quotations that express what I want to say with a noble eloquence, but I fear the result. The prejudice against such remote thinkers as Isaiah and Plato, Wordsworth, Newman and Emerson is too strong! There is no reason why, in my anxiety to save civilization, I should risk being stoned to death by the ungodly young cynics whose spiritual firmament is illumined only by the electric signs of Broadway.

However, it is perhaps not so bad a thing that, with fewer challenging voices to warn and cheer, there may be many who seek a better way of living, though they find difficulty in establishing communication with one another. The scolding voice of Carlyle would avail little in these days—and we know that Carlyle was wrong about many things; it is a question whether a new Emerson would so readily be enthroned with the prophets if he were to rise among us. The world will not mark time and it will not go back. Those who would rouse man to nobler thinking and finer action must accommodate themselves to inevitable change—must indeed learn to speak to restless moving crowds.

It would appear that we have lost out of America the spiritual passion that brought to our forebears peace, security and happiness—that fine ardor which sustained the pioneer who dared the wilderness and that moral passion which animated the men and women who saw "the glory of the coming of the Lord" through the antislavery struggle. There were flashes of this on our entrance into the greatest of wars, and I am of those who believe that time will do justice to the high mood in which President Wilson offered his League of Nations program. There is no member of Congress in either branch who can instantly challenge the nation's interest through confidence in his sanity, wisdom and disinterestedness.

We witness periodically lively debates as to what's the matter with the churches. Many insist that there is nothing wrong with them, that the trouble is with erring and wilful man. But the fact remains that if man—"the average sensual man"—prefers to remain outside the church it must be because he fails to find in organized religion something that he greatly needs—something, indeed, the lack of which is giving him serious concern. Discussions of the authenticity of the scriptures; most points of textual criticism and speculations as to the trustworthiness of the reports of miracles are of no interest to him. The most interesting account of the trial of Scopes, the Tennessee school-teacher, for teaching evolution was written by a sports writer who "kidded" the whole proceeding. We have overworked a great deal the idea that the church must increase its efficiency and prove its worth in good works if it would meet its duty and its opportunity. Except in a few instances, efforts to make the church a center of social service have failed, chiefly because the church is obliged to compete with other agencies better equipped to do the work. A minister with whom I discussed these matters several years ago confessed that his own experiments with socialization had failed, and that in the future he meant to concentrate upon an attempt to make of his church an inspirational center through the preaching of

Christ's gospel. At the time I thought him a reactionary, but in my later cogitations I have reached the conclusion that he was right. The great need of mankind is the cultivation of the inner spirit, and the strengthening of the power of dissociation from the gross and material. For after all the bodies of men are not so badly cared for; the gains in this particular have been enormous. It is the spirit of man that presents the more serious problem. Education has so strengthened individualism that it is no longer possible to prescribe for large groups, or practise forced feeding upon the spiritually hungry who refuse to be fed.

It is in keeping with the spirit of the time that we demand something new, and to nothing do we lend a more attentive ear than to new interpretations or applications of the old religion. I have heard men say that their business affairs had never been so prosperous as since they embraced Christian Science. Such declarations leave me numb and unable to escape from a feeling that there is something a little gross in the idea of conforming to a faith for the material benefit to be derived from it. That faith and hope are all-potent and will even work miracles in the possessor can not be gainsaid, but I prefer not to believe that my neighbor is appraising his religious benefits with an eye upon a balance sheet. I am not noting these as typical instances or as the basis for an indictment of that

impressively large body of persons who find help in Christian Science or kindred cults. On the other hand, there is something reassuring in the knowledge that so many who have had no previous experience of religion are feeling and satisfying a need for "something" which hands can not touch nor eyes see.

It is reassuring that at a time when we are prone to believe that science has destroyed our capacity for accepting the supernatural, many of us, often unconsciously, find ourselves ranging the infinite for even more wondrous things than we have known. The idea that we shall arrive eventually at a blank wall and sink down and perish is repugnant and hateful to most of us. We value ourselves more highly than that. In the secret recesses of man's heart it is difficult for him to believe that he is to be cast as rubbish to the void.

I have been struck during the past two years by the number of men, many of them possessing scant culture as such things are reckoned, who have in unpremeditated conversation touched upon the need of a belief of some kind. The other morning I met an old friend—one of the most practical-minded men I know, whom I had never associated with the thought of religion as the term is commonly employed. He was looking unusually well, and I knew that the conditions of his life were in every way fortunate. We stood on a busy corner

for some time, and a remark of mine as to the troubled state of the world caused him to say, very soberly: "We can be sure life isn't all right here on the pavement. There's something more than this—something working in us all the time to make us and the world better."

The look in his face as he turned away haunted me all day. . . . *Sat est vixisse.* No; it's not enough to have lived. It is in trying to be content in the belief that the earth is all-sufficient that we find ourselves drifting on the rock-bound coasts of materialism.

The mystical strain in man's blood persists. We are eager to believe in signs and wonders; science, it might almost be said, has only set higher goals for our credulity. Living as we do between two mysteries, it is inevitable that we speculate as to the nature of the doors by which we effect our entrance and exit. In great or less degree we are all mystics. The scientist, intent upon his microscope, is not so widely separated from some brooding spirit who in a monastery cell peers into the infinite. In the course of my life I have heard but one man say flatly that he believed there is nothing beyond this life; though I of course know many who accept Christianity only with reservations. It is the commonest of experiences to "look before and after and pine for what is not"—to seek escape from those temporal things which may be seen and ex-

plore the unknown for those unseen things which Paul pronounced to be eternal. The highest happiness is not in what we have, but in what we hope to attain. My interest centers upon that very large —perhaps a preponderating number of human beings—who are carried on the books of no church, who are mistrustful of all organized religion, but who are, it may be said, intuitionalists in spiritual things. They want "something"; they feel there must be—"something." It is unfortunate that there are so few guides and helps for their stimulus and that, often by reason of sheer diffidence,—and there is nothing as to which we are so secretive and sensitive as to the questionings of the soul,—they walk through the world as strangers, unable to express their needs intelligibly.

The psychologist does not wholly explain those moods, the experience of many of us, in which nothing seems substantial or real, and we struggle with a vague but insistent consciousness of influences and powers that puzzle and bewilder us. Most of us keep such matters to ourselves as something precious and likely to be spoiled by analysis or exposure to discussion. And here again we are confronted by the desire of our souls to believe there is—"something."

Self-reliance has its limitations. We may strut and brag but we are not so sure of ourselves. Henley's outburst of gratitude to whatever gods there

be for his unconquerable soul does not, in a sober hour, impress me as a declaration of high courage but as a bit of swaggering bravado. The soul is not only conquerable but it is an extremely vulnerable contrivance. Man is not the master of his fate, but in a very large degree the victim or the beneficiary of circumstances over which he has precious little control. Thus it is that we never wholly escape from a sense that forces beyond our bourne of Time and Place govern human destiny.

Preoccupation with the material, the glorification of efficiency, the worship of magnitude, are not sufficient to make us a happy people. The augmentation of size and numbers only increases the burden we are laying upon our successors of establishing America in the world's eyes as a land of serenity and contentment, attentive to the cultivation of that spiritual grace which does, little as we may like to believe it, make for national greatness.

How the inner spark may be fostered and enkindled is a matter of immediate concern to all who truly love and would serve America. What part the churches of our fathers are to play in this, or whether new agencies must be devised to assist man in his gropings for things true, things elevated, things just, things pure, things amiable, things of good report—what part organized religion as we now know it may have in leading man in

his gropings for these things opens a wide field for speculation. The old popular conceptions of a Supreme Deity have undergone marked changes; nor may we ignore the increasing impatience of creeds and dogmatic theology; but man has not yet done with God. Certain it is that in the "something" which the Hebrews deified as the Eternal who loved righteousness, and which illumined the world through the precept and example, "the sweet reasonableness" of Jesus, lies man's surest hope of happiness; and not lightly will he relinquish it.

WITHOUT BENEFIT OF COLLEGE

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A NARRATIVE of personal experience is worthless unless it is true, and this story of the processes by which I gained what may be called an education is as frank and accurate as I can make it. I shouldn't be writing it at all if it were not for the hope that some boy or girl, denied an opportunity to go to college, or some parent, puzzled and distressed because a child seems slow or stupid, may find comfort and encouragement in my confessions.

I was undoubtedly below the average child in my ability to learn. Physically I was far from robust, and I was shy, sensitive, preyed upon by a multitude of fears. I was sent to the public school at six, and for nine years my mother was constantly visiting my teachers to try to solve the problem presented by my deficiencies. I was convinced of my stupidity when, after many vicissitudes, I managed to reach the high school and was confronted by the fearsome symbols of algebra. Even before this my excursions in primary mathematics had not been brilliant, and to this day I find the sight of figures of any kind profoundly disturbing. I was well advanced in manhood when it became necessary for

me to master bookkeeping, and I set about it with some success, so that I was able to peruse a balance sheet intelligently; but by that time I had trained my faculties in other fields to a point where I knew how to learn what, at a given moment, it might be necessary for me to know, and this is the real burden of my story.

My parents were poor, but it was not poverty that drove me from the schoolhouse so much as panic over the algebraic signs. My mother could and did work the problems I carried home, but her attempts to explain the reason for the solutions only added to my befuddlement. And so, quite on my own motion, and with no very clear idea of what lay before me, the incident represented by the praiseworthy attempts of the constituted authorities of Indianapolis to educate me was permanently closed. My teachers were fine women, and I remember them with gratitude for the patience and kindness with which they led me from Webb's Reading Method on to that grim wall where, with a sense of discouragement and defeat, I gave up the fight.

Environment is, beyond question, a powerful factor in the upbringing of a child. I can see now that in spite of my inability to adjust myself to the educational machinery, I had really learned a good deal merely by listening to the talk at home. A good deal of American history was represented in

both sides of our family. My grandfather Meredith was the son of a Revolutionary soldier, and his vivid memories of his father, who had seen Washington face to face, linked me to "old far-off, forgotten things and battles long ago." My father was a Kentuckian, farm bred, and faithful to the soil until arduous service in the Civil War ruined his health and sent him to town to earn a living. The home talk was of public men and politics rather than of books, but it was of a nature to awaken my curiosity as to biography and history. My mother had enjoyed much better educational advantages than my father and had a much broader range of interests. Her political prejudices were the strongest I have ever known. She played the piano very well and ours was one of the old-fashioned households where we had Sunday evening hymns.

As the Merediths were Welsh, with a dash of Irish, I attribute to her such imagination as I may possess. I derived from her a keen curiosity as to all things of contemporaneous human interest. She had heard all the great orators of her youth and young womanhood, and among my happiest memories are those of public meetings we attended together. Often she would quote a friend of hers, Phoebe Taylor, a Quakeress, who had said she'd never lie straight in her coffin unless she voted before she died. Nothing in my mother's life pleased her more than the fact that it became possible for

her to exercise the right of franchise once, though she had to establish her citizenship in Colorado to do it! She was reared a Methodist, but became an Episcopalian shortly after her marriage; shifted to the Presbyterian church and then back to the Episcopal fold for reasons of no importance save as an illustration of her independence as to all things. She was small and dark with black hair that never whitened to the end of her days. One of her eyes was dark gray and the other blue, an oddity as to which she was always sensitive.

Perhaps poverty may not with propriety be counted an educational influence, but I will say of our home that in those days, when we lived in a seven-room, one-story cottage, I learned important lessons in sacrifice and cooperation. "Helping mother" was never perfunctory any more than it was compulsory. My sister and I "washed the cups and saucers up and brushed the crumbs away," and we had a lot of fun doing it. I liked to play as well as any other boy, but it never seemed a hardship to be obliged to devote a couple of hours every Saturday morning to the splitting of kindling and other chores. I can weep now when I recall my mother's cheery spirit, her solicitude for the comfort of all of us, her confident faith, through all adversity, in better times ahead. What pains she took to make sure I was turned out for school presentably—even polishing my brass-toed boots! It was in

her mother-heart to help me get somewhere, and she was no prouder in after years, when I put my first book into her hands, than when she saw me off to school "with shining morning face" and "manners" that reflected her own fine sense of courtesy. Even when the going was hard and a pot of corn-meal mush might constitute the whole supper for the family, there was no grumbling. The world has always seemed to me a kind and cheerful place. I don't recall that I was ever snubbed more than once for my poverty, and it hurt a little, but I wasn't bitter about it. The boys of prosperous families in our district always treated me well enough. A sound boy is always fundamentally a democrat.

My mother knew her Prayer Book, and it was a part of my upbringing to avoid envy, hatred and malice and all uncharitableness. My father was the gentlest of men; he met failure and disappointment with a brave spirit. Courage indeed was a working principle and a watchword in our household, as was not unnatural in a family with a long reach on both sides into the early pioneering of the western wilderness.

My first employments were of considerable importance in what, for convenience, I am calling my education. Even before I severed my connection with the schoolhouse I had spent two summers in a drug store, doing chores and tending the

soda fountain, which was a simple affair in those days. The Latin inscriptions on the bottles piqued my curiosity, and I bored into the pharmacopœia for clues to their meaning. Here was a new idea—that foreign languages really had some use! I learned from the prescription clerk—he was also an artist of talent and drew crayon caricatures of prominent citizens—that Latin botanical names were retained because the ancient tongue was established and fixed, so that there could never be any excuse for error in composing a prescription.

The scene of these activities was in the center of town, and my interest in people as such was stimulated by my observations of the citizenry. The talk at home had quickened my curiosity about the important men of the city, and I soon knew most of them by sight—clergymen, physicians, lawyers. My interest in business men was less passionate, though a banker who looked and dressed like the pictures of Daniel Webster held my fancy until a lad who worked for him told me that he was captious, stingy and wholly undeserving of my regard. Those were the days of torchlight processions, and I observed all such functions with delight without regard to party. I paid my tribute to all the visiting heroes—shook hands with Grant and trotted beside Sherman's carriage as he rode through the street. This special attention to the hero of the march to the sea was due to the fact that my father

was said to resemble him. The ways and the manners of all the great fascinated me. I am rather proud of my early heroes, and I suggest to aspiring youth the desirability of hero worship as a stimulus to ambition. I changed my heroes every few weeks, but the quality improved, I think, as I went along.

In my eager pursuit of novelties and sensations I was watching the election returns hung up in front of a telegraph office one night when the manager came out and offered me a quarter to carry bulletins to the newspaper offices. I earned the quarter, for I was kept running till two o'clock in the morning. But the incident was of some significance, as I saw editors at work for the first time and, of course, resolved to be a newspaper man. It was necessary to my happiness at that time always to be wanting to "be" something.

That was the fall I quit school, and it occurred to me that I might facilitate my entrance into journalism by becoming a compositor. Others had done this, my grandfather told me, and it didn't seem a bad idea. I worked for a time in a job office, where instead of being allowed to learn the trade I was kept busy tending a news-stand connected with the establishment. I did learn the cases, but little beyond that, so I transferred myself to another concern with the same object in view; but there again I was doomed to disappointment. I was assigned to

the counting-room as assistant to the porter, a giant of a man who quite unconsciously became an impelling factor in my education. I was at work every morning at seven, sweeping out the business office, polishing show-cases, purifying cuspidors, carrying proofs, and pushing a wabbly wheelbarrow over town delivering heavy packages. I rejoiced when the railway tracks that bisect Indianapolis were elevated for I had pushed my barrow bumpity-bumpity over the rails scores of times and was a pioneer advocate of track elevation.

I began now to do considerable serious thinking and to ponder the possibility of escape from the wheelbarrow and all that it connoted as to my future, to say nothing of the immediate back-aching present. I might some day attain the porter's job or possibly succeed the shipping clerk. But my heroes—those in books and the widening circle of successful men I saw in the streets—were not shipping clerks or porters.

My reading at that time was of the most miscellaneous order. I became acquainted with the Public Library and read voraciously,—all of "Oliver Optic," "Harry Castlemon," Mayne Reid, and Elijah Kellogg and my lively imagination made me the hero of all these tales in succession. Then some one gave me a copy of *The Last Days of Pompeii* which led me to read others of Bulwar Lytton's romances. They pleased me so much that I determined to ex-

plore history and found in the library a number of books designed to instruct youth as to the glory that was Greece and the grandeur that was Rome.

I discovered by happy accident a minister in town, the pastor of a fashionable church, if we had such a thing in Indianapolis, who talked about things that boys could understand. I was watching a parade of the G. A. R. get under way when I marked a tall, dark, Indian-like man quietly holding his horse in Circle Park. My admiring eyes followed him in the parade, and I learned that he was Myron W. Reed, the pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, and that he had been a captain of cavalry in what to us then was the great war. I was curious to know what manner of preacher a captain of cavalry would prove to be, and thereupon attached myself to the back seat of Reed's church.

Many there must be over the country who remember Reed, though he died in Denver thirty years ago. He stood up straight and tall in his pulpit and read, quietly but effectively, an Emerson-like essay—it couldn't be called a sermon—in which he alluded with pleasant casualness to Marco Polo, John Brown of Osawatomie, and Abraham Lincoln. He spoke of the Shepherd Kings and the Prophets as if they might still be found somewhere around Indianapolis. I enlisted some of the boy friends with whom I had played pirate in the river bottoms, and we would sneak furtively in and out of

the church, fearful lest some one would speak to us. I think no other man ever exercised quite the spell upon me that Reed did. If I saw him down-town I would follow him, as he stalked along austerely, looking like a hunter or a plainsman. Though Reed was only one of many men visible in the streets of Indianapolis who attracted me, I speak of him with some particularity because my debt to him as an inspiring influence is very great. I never knew him, never spoke to him, but it was he who sent me to Emerson and Thoreau by his citation of those New Englanders in his simple compact deliverances. I procured a small volume of Emerson's essays that fitted neatly into my coat pocket and carried it around with me. Reed's manner of reading the Scriptures and his elucidation of texts humanized the Bible characters. The revelation that Paul was a tentmaker, Peter a fisherman, and Jesus the son of a carpenter made the New Testament a living document instead of the vague formidable thing it had struck me as being in Sunday-school.

I am surprised now as I reflect upon the various directions in which my curiosity led me. In no mean sense I was making the town itself my school, appointing its most brilliant and stimulating men my teachers and helpers. Contemporary with Reed in Indianapolis was a minister of another sort, Oscar C. McCulloch, who conducted a church of the institutional type and was an interesting speaker. He

was rather more literary than Reed, but in his different fashion he stood for liberality. His congregation at the Plymouth Congregational Church embraced all sorts and conditions of men, and I felt more at home in the collapsible seats of his auditorium than in the stiffer benches of Reed's Presbyterian church. And Plymouth offered a dollar lecture course and free organ recitals which gave me my first clue to good music.

It must not be too readily assumed from these confessions that I was a young saint. I was only curious about things that happened to strike my fancy, and instinctively sought what I wanted by the pleasantest avenues open to me. If I found them in hospitable churches, it was by good luck rather than from any religious feeling, for at this same period I was a delighted spectator of Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, which brought to the fair-grounds at Indianapolis Doctor Carver, "the Evil Spirit of the Plains," and Captain Bogardus, the Champion Wing Shot of the World. Under this inspiration I became myself an excellent rifle shot, roaming the river bottoms before my working hours in pursuit of game that didn't exist.

The wonder is that I ever emerged from the chaos of interests in which I plunged so joyously. My heroes were so numerous and changed so constantly that it was a serious question whether I would elect to become an intrepid scout of the

plains, a soldier like General Custer, whose life and writings I read, a statesman and an orator, or a writer like Mark Twain. I was probably learning more by observing and listening than from the books I borrowed from the library, which ran the whole range of human knowledge. Everything, verily, was fish to my net! If I made a mistake in taking a number from the library catalogue, I accepted the error in good part and read the wrong book no matter what its nature. The variety of reading I did between my fifteenth and eighteenth years would shock and grieve an orderly-minded pedagogue; but, curiously enough, much that I blundered into was of real worth and helped me to find myself.

My emancipation from the wheelbarrow was still to be effected, and a boy friend several years my senior suggested that we study shorthand together. I had given up the idea of reaching journalism from the compositor's case, and my friend, a Dickens addict, pointed out that the author of Pickwick had been a stenographer. We thereupon attacked Pitman's Manual, and after we had acquired the rudiments read to each other until we gained some facility. The printing office paid me two dollars a week, and when I applied to a court reporter for a job he said he would pay me the same amount to run errands and tend his office. He was soon dictating to me from his notes between sessions of court, and my vocabulary was enlarged by the ad-

dition of legal phraseology with incidental Latin. The investment of a quarter in a second-hand bookstore put me in possession of a Latin grammar at which I worked alone in my spare time. I had already done some scribbling, sending my offerings to the local weekly journals, which occasionally printed them. My employer took an interest in me and was tolerant of my literary ambitions. In the course of a year I was able to help him materially, and he would entrust to me the taking of depositions and send me out to lawyers in need of special secretarial help. The friend who had initiated me into the mysteries of shorthand got a job as reporter on one of the newspapers, thereby filling me with the meanest envy. He told me with fine scorn that there was nothing to be got from shorthand, that journalism was the great thing.

But there was, seemingly, a certain inevitableness in the steps I was obliged to take in perfecting my deliverance from the wheelbarrow. I now moved to the law office of John T. Dye and William P. Fishback, who were not only lawyers of the highest standing at the Indiana bar, but cultivated men, with a wide range of interests. My duties were more particularly with Mr. Dye, who was the general counsel of an important railroad. Both he and Mr. Fishback were deeply interested in the changing political and spiritual currents of that day. I began to realize the existence of such a thing as an intellec-

tual life. There were forces and tendencies in the world that I had never dreamed of. The cultivated thinking men of the city frequently dropped into the office, and I heard there first the names of Darwin, Huxley, John Stuart Mill and the rest of the great Victorians.

I was reading a great deal of poetry and trying my own hand at versification. Louis Howland, a young man in a neighboring office who was a Yale graduate of strong literary bent, introduced me to Matthew Arnold's poems and essays. While Howland waited for clients, he amused himself by taking a hand in my education. In my second year in the office—I was now eighteen—I got an entirely new idea of politics by listening to discussions of the strenuous Blaine-Cleveland campaign. The men with whom I was in daily contact had all been Republicans, but they promptly turned Mugwump. Though my family was strongly Republican I, too, became a Mugwump, but I went, in a tolerant spirit, to hear Blaine speak that I might judge for myself of the Plumed Knight's qualifications for the presidency. That campaign served me as an excellent course in politics and political economy. Certain impressions and convictions as to civic duties and obligations established in my mind in that momentous year abide with me, and they have colored the considerable amount of writing and speaking I have done on political subjects.

The next year I transferred my portfolio to another law office. My new employers were a brother and a nephew of General Lew Wallace, and this juxtaposition to the author of *Ben Hur* marked another step in my education. By this time I was able to appear in court on "rule mornings" and make motions for my firm, and my acquaintance with legal formulas had proceeded to a point where I could, with a few hints, prepare simple complaints and demurrers. I was encouraged to take up the law in earnest, and I did do a good deal of the elementary reading. The origin and development of law, the slow-gathering stream of wisdom represented in the common law, struck me as enormously interesting. Finding that there was such a thing as maritime law, I went after it with enthusiasm, searching out all the cases in the reports, as much for the "stories" of collisions and other causes of action incident to those who go down to the sea in ships as for the point of the decisions. In those days the federal court at Indianapolis was invoked occasionally in some dispute relating to the bumping of steamboats on the Ohio, but obviously I made no mistake in abandoning my fleeting ambition to become a proctor in admiralty. What I learned of the law and of legal procedure has been of the greatest service to me as a writer.

Nothing troubled me very much at that time except my ignorance! Things were going more com-

fortably at home; my mother's constant encouragement in my attempts to write buoyed my spirit. It never occurred to me to go back to school. I had burned my bridges, and retreat was impossible. But I kept on poking my little tin dipper into the springs of knowledge wherever my curiosity led me. Whenever I was alone with pencil and paper I practised writing—every sort of thing. My pride was aroused; what others knew I wanted to know. It was sheer good luck that threw me with men of cultivation at this period. They never knew how much I learned from them! I can see now that I would never have been a successful student if I had gone to college; the routine of a fixed curriculum would have crippled my initiative. I gathered such fruit as pleased me from the tree of knowledge and did not worry about the rest. I have the greatest reverence for exact scholarship, but I was born with what, I believe, is called a journalistic mind and took the shortest cut to any information I wanted.

It occurred to me that I ought to add Greek to my accomplishments. I sought a retired college professor and asked him to give me lessons. He at once began quizzing me fiercely as to my knowledge of Latin grammar. I could at that time get the sense of a page of Latin prose, but when it came to grammar my ignorance was magnificent. He haughtily refused to tutor one so pitifully ignorant. And while I am about it I may as well confess that never, at any

time in my life, have I known any English grammar. The forms and rules—indeed the whole grammatical apparatus—never interested me a particle. But the examples in the school text-books did! While the other youngsters were dutifully conjugating I committed the examples to memory. Most of these were taken from the masters of prose or from the great poets. I have never forgotten them, and they have served me often and well. And so, annoyed that any one could be so foolish as to want me to bother with the grammar of a language which I read to my own satisfaction, trippingly and skippingly, I tackled Greek in my own blithe irresponsible fashion with somebody's text-book that put the student to reading the *Anabasis* at once. This was stupid, funny or pathetic as you like. I was able, thirty years later, to translate, under the eye of a bishop, some sentences in Greek from St. Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians on a tablet in an English cathedral. This made a hit with the bishop; I could see that he formed a more favorable opinion of my piety and scholarship.

I picked up French by subscribing to a French newspaper, and the only real work I ever did in my adventures with languages was with a teacher in Italian after I had passed my majority. He was a sensible fellow, and finding that I held revolutionary ideas as to the proper manner of teaching languages, we began reading together and spent a jolly winter at it. These experiments with alien tongues

were, I suppose, prompted by a curiosity as to the mental experience of knowing something of languages other than my own. I merely peered into them and skimmed the surface. I acquired easily and forgot quite as readily.

The sonorous, rhythmical phraseology of the old equity pleadings charmed me; they were almost as pleasing to my stylistic sense as Isaiah and the Psalms, or the Collects in the Book of Common Prayer. I always delighted in words and in the effects to be got from them. No one ever advised me to read poetry; I merely liked it and read it for the pleasure it gave me. I memorized all the poetry in my school readers whether it was required or not, and wherever I encountered lines anywhere that seemed worth acquiring I added them to my collection. My favorites were of the majestic or martial order, and I would declaim them for my private edification as I walked the streets.

As I ranged our Hoosier capital in the consulship of Plancus, I seem to have been an observing youngster, for many of the interesting characters visible in our streets impressed themselves indelibly in my memory. Every town has, of course, persons marked by eccentricity or with a personal history that sets them apart. While there are odd types likely to be duplicated in similar environment anywhere in America, I am constrained to believe that Indianapolis did have in the time of which I write a great-

er number of unusual characters than any other town with which I have since been familiar.

I wish I might preserve for posterity a list of the last men to wear cloaks in our town. It is possible that Mr. George Merritt was not the last man to wear a shawl in our thoroughfares, but until I am corrected I shall contend that he was the last shawled man I ever saw. Colonel W. R. Holloway, postmaster and newspaper man, wore a cloak for many years after I had added him to my gallery of worthies. But he produced no such stirring effect upon the imagination as Ben D. House, a poet whom I must not pass without dipping my colors. He was a big fellow who walked with a swagger and carried a cane. He confided to me once that his cloak had been made by the father of Lawrence Barrett, the actor. House died many years ago and I am probably the only man alive who can quote any of his verses. Perhaps because I was interested in poetry, or because I lent a sympathetic and credulous ear to his narratives of personal adventure, House was amiably tolerant of my society. He was a native of Vermont, served in a cavalry regiment in the Civil War, and after peace was declared drifted to Indianapolis. In his cloak and slouch hat he seemed to me the ideal bard of tradition. I used to steal into his office (he was adjutant general of the Grand Army of the Republic) and sit adoring him and listening to him even as Desdemona listened to Othello. He was an assiduous son-

neteer and one of his pieces, *Appomattox,* written on the occasion of Grant's death, still seems to me much above the average of such tributes:

"To peace-white ashes sunk war's lurid flame,
The drums had ceased to growl, and died away
The bark of guns, where fronting armies lay,
And for the day the dogs of war were tame
And resting on the field of blood-bought fame,
For conquered peace o'er horrid war held sway
On her won field, a score of years to-day,
Where to her champion forth a white flag came.

"O, nation's chief! thine eyes have seen again
A whiter flag come forth to summon thee
Than that pale scarf which gleamed above war's stain,
To parley o'er the end of its red reign—
The truce of God that sets from battle free
Thy dauntless soul, and thy worn life from pain."

Another cloaked poet of little more than local fame was Dan L. Paine, who wrote a poem on the death of George Harding, a brother journalist, that contained at least one arresting line, in praise of the valiant of all time:

"On freedom's hights they stand as sentinels
Brave tropic suns, delve in earth's deepest caves,

And climb the ladder of the parallels,
To sleep in icy graves."

The idea of climbing the ladder of the parallels to sleep in icy graves is still good, though Byrd has guided an aeroplane across the Pole! Paine had a fine instinct for literature and was the helpful and encouraging friend of many young writers.

It may be that the fountains of Hoosier song are drying up, for certainly fewer poets adorn our landscape than in those golden days, when Indiana rejoiced in Riley and Maurice Thompson and an industrious battalion of *minores poetæ.* Poets would dart from the *Herald* office, seize a passer-by and drag him in to hear a new lyric. I weighed much less in those days than I do now and wore, I fancy, a wistful and tubercular air, which may account for the fact that much verse was confided to my ear by those songsters. They also confided to me in certain instances their pecuniary embarrassments and domestic embroilments. Two of them told me in the strictest confidence of their murderous intentions toward each other, whereupon both immediately left town, greatly to my sorrow.

Among newspaper men of that era I must mention Berry R. Sulgrove, a most diverting character and the heaviest consumer of chewing tobacco I ever knew. I recall vividly my first visit to his house in South Street when he received me in his stocking

feet, being otherwise clad in trousers, "galluses" and undershirt. He immediately gave me a complete history of my own family from remote generations, including facts about my father's service in the Civil War of which I was ignorant. When I was about to leave he said that if I would wait for him to dress he would walk down-town with me. The incompleteness of his afternoon toilet led me to believe that an hour at least would be necessary to make him presentable for the street. However, he reappeared instantly, having pinned a black silk handkerchief about his neck and chest to conceal his lack of linen and put on his shoes, coat and hat. A Pickwickian figure—short, bald, rotund, asthmatic, heavily spectacled, his appearance gave no hint of his fine scholarship. He knew—I fear to say how many languages, but I remember that Hebrew was among them—and he wrote with wonderful clarity a good deal in Macaulay's manner and with frequent recourse to Macaulay's rolling antitheses. He had, too, Macaulay's prodigious memory. His literary habits were peculiar to himself. We used to suspect at the *News* office that he produced his own ink by squeezing the juice from elderberries; he wrote, with a mammoth cork penholder, an almost microscopic but perfectly legible hand. His manuscript was usually written on scraps of paper, election tickets of the old narrow type being his favorite papyrus; or hand-bills—picked up in the street and

not necessarily clean. His contributions to the *News* used to reach the editorial rooms early in the morning—tight little rolls shot up in the pneumatic tube—and he easily got half a column into a piece of paper the size of the hand. It was his habit to rise with the sun, walk out into the river bottoms and ponder the world's mysteries and the beauties of nature and then go home and write with incredible ease his column or so of editorial. He was a free lance and wrote what he pleased, not infrequently of foreign affairs in which he was thoroughly informed. Occasionally he sent in an item of news picked up in his wanderings, or described in felicitous phrase the changing moods of nature in the McCarty Bottoms.

While in the Wallace law office I submitted a short poem called *Grape Bloom* (we had a grape arbor in our back yard) to a New York weekly paper and received three dollars for it. I spent more than this sum buying copies of the paper, but never saw my poem in print. A Chicago newspaper was offering a prize of ten dollars for the best short story in a weekly contest, and I scored with my first attempt—a column and a half yarn called *The Tale of a Postage Stamp.* I made haste to send in another offering, but it failed to hit the bull's-eye. I needed a new hero to support my ambitions and just then General Lew Wallace, who had been minister to Turkey, returned to his home in Crawfordsville and

was frequently in Indianapolis, where he made the law office his loafing place. As I was born in Crawfordsville, and my father had belonged to a Zouave company which Wallace had organized there some time before the Civil War, he spoke encouragingly to me about the verses I offered for his criticism. I remember, too, that he corrected my pronunciation of the world Italian when I used it in his presence with the initial *i* long!

Even as Myron Reed, the minister, had captivated my fancy, so Wallace, too, was a man to charm an imaginative youth. He was strikingly handsome, with the bearing of a soldier and the manners of a courtier. Not Arthur nor Lancelot nor any of the other orgulous knights in Malory seem to me even now as delightful as Wallace. I enrolled him at once as one of my educators; I learned much of books and men from him. Always wherever I met him, until I saw him lying old and broken in his last illness, I felt his charm. Though a native of Indiana, (his father had been governor of the state), he was not like other Hoosier folk. Swarthy as an Arab, gracious but incisive of speech, he struck me always as just having arrived, forthright and bent upon adventure, from some far land of enchantment. I was always thrilled when he drew out his gold cigarette case studded with precious stones, which the Sultan had given him.

Still other challenging spirits swam into my

ken about that time. Crawfordsville was called "the Hoosier Athens," and besides General Wallace, Maurice and Will H. Thompson lived there, and they, too, were touched with a fine glamour of romance. By their writings they revived the well-nigh lost art of the archer. Will Thompson who wrote *The High Tide at Gettysburg*—one of the noblest poems in the American anthology—was a master of the longbow. The two brothers contributed not a little to my education; they at least made it seem a fine thing to write—to be a literary person. And in the same town lived Mary H. Krout, whose *Little Brown Hands* used to be in all the school readers, and she became a helpful and stimulating counselor.

The faculty, so to speak, of my self-conducted university was increased importantly at this juncture by the addition of James Whitcomb Riley. His poems in the *Indianapolis Journal* were attracting wide attention; I had heard him give one of his incomparable readings at a G. A. R. entertainment and had eyed him with reverence in the street. He strolled into the law office one morning carrying a Cincinnati newspaper in which a poem of mine had been copied from the *Journal.* He was the shyest of mortals, and I think he was as much embarrassed as I was during the brief interview. What he said did not matter; that he had taken the trouble to look me up at all was what counted. I had imagined that no

one outside my family was paying the slightest attention to my verses, and to find that Riley—a poet of mounting fame—was conscious of my presence on the earth lifted my spirits to a new high altitude. In a few weeks he came back and said—oh, incredible!—that he wanted to show me some poems he was getting together for a book. We went to supper in a down-town restaurant where he ordered a beefsteak with mushrooms—my first acquaintance with that delectable combination. Afterward we went to his room in a hotel—a bare forlorn place—and he took a pile of manuscript from the mantel. Much to my consternation he began to swear. He invited all the powers of evil to destroy the chambermaid who cared for that room. I was to learn as our acquaintance progressed that his profanity really meant nothing; the extravagance of his maledictions made them ridiculous. But for half an hour he muttered and growled as he explored every corner of the room, and it was some time before I grasped the idea that one of the poems he wished particularly to show me was missing. If that chambermaid had only *told* him she wanted the thing, he would gladly have given it to her! But to purloin it in his absence—abuse the confidence he had always reposed in the woman—that was what hurt! Then he found the troublesome sheet where, he ruefully confessed, he remembered now that he had placed it, and the air cleared.

What helped me at once was his generous assumption that I was a writer. He wrote and I wrote; we were both writers! The flattery of this was highly stimulating. For the first time I really thought of myself—nineteen and a stenographer in a law office! —as one of the glorious company of highly endowed beings who wrote and got into print. My debt to Riley is incalculable. One great lesson I learned from him was that a writer serves himself best by using home material. The "human kind and nature kind" which he wrought into song lay close at home—in the fields and by the streams of his beloved Hancock County or in the streets of Indianapolis. His was a home-keeping and a home-loving mind. He deepened my interest in character study by his genius for verbal portraiture. To walk the street with him was in itself a lesson in minute observation. An unusual face or any peculiarity of speech, particularly anything bordering on the grotesque, invited his whimsical comment. Though outwardly indifferent, his serene, contemplative eyes missed nothing.

The *Indianapolis Sentinel,* a morning newspaper, changed hands about this time, and its new editor, Gus C. Matthews, an old friend of my father, had printed a few poems and sketches of mine while conducting a magazine in Chicago called the *Current.* Here was my chance to make the plunge into newspaper work. The *Sentinel* offered me twelve

dollars a week to join its local staff, which consisted of the city editor and one reporter. The law office was paying me five dollars, and twelve looked munificent. I immediately bade the law good-by and realized my ambition to become a reporter. Scott C. Bone, the city editor (afterward governor of Alaska) gave me the court-house and the police stations as my "run." Matthews—now long dead—was a scholar and a gentleman, and Bone, one of the best of fellows—kind, considerate and helpful. My duties began at noon and ended when the paper went to press at half past two in the morning.

I retain the pleasantest memories of homes that were now hospitably opened to me. Among the beeches of Woodruff Place dwelt some of the most cultivated and charming people I have ever known. Here were young men of varied gifts with wives who were their sympathetic and helpful comrades. The talk at their firesides and on their verandas was unfailingly good. Literature and the fine arts were not neglected and to these friends it was always safe to exhibit my experiments in versification. Alfred Potts, of this company, was a business genius and a man of droll humor. And, close at hand, lived John L. Griffiths, distinguished orator, afterward consul-general at London, where his official duties did not interfere with the forming of warm friendships with Chesterton and other eminent men of letters. And how happy were hours spent in the

Woodruff home of William Fortune, whose charming wife—"divinely tall and most divinely fair"—with her three lovely children gathering wild flowers under the lordly trees, encouraged belief that the picture might at any moment be completed by the arrival of Atalanta or Diana. Mr. Fortune, beginning life as a newspaper reporter, has, like most of those other friends of my youth, achieved success in many fields. He has initiated and carried through important movements for the public good, and is now president of that ancient and honorable institution, the American Peace Society.

I thoroughly enjoyed my work as a reporter. More things happened in our town that year—or so it seems in the retrospect—than have ever happened since. Murders were of frequent occurrence, and it was the rule that no matter at what hour the lethal stroke was delivered I might write until the foreman called "Thirty!" On my way back from an assignment I would visualize my story in print. To this day I keep the habit; that is, I fashion in my head any work I have undertaken before I begin to write, so that I see it in print even to the paragraphing.

Matthews came into the city room hurriedly one night and asked me if I would write an editorial for the Sunday edition then being made up. I produced an article comparing the work of Henry James with that of William Dean Howells and waited till the paper was out for the felicity of see-

ing it in print. Night work left me no chance to read, and in a year I found employment on the *Indianapolis News,* an afternoon paper, where I remained for twelve years, passing from one position to another until I became, so it was said, a pretty good newspaper man. John H. Holliday, the proprietor and editor of the paper, held the highest ideals of the journalist's responsibility, and it would be impossible, without writing a book, to do justice to all that I learned from him.

Always I was reading, and I ceased my impetuous dashes into strange fields and read all the good English prose I could lay my hands on. I did not "play the sedulous ape" to the masters as Stevenson did, but I read and pondered a vast amount of sound stuff. As I was always shy about asking questions, I sought answers in the writing of Sir Thomas Browne, Burke, Carlyle, Ruskin, Newman and Pater. I am not without my humor, and it has tickled me enormously that I have lectured on style now and then—even before critical audiences—and, in a manner of speaking, "got away with it."

Of social life I knew nothing until I was twenty-three or four. I knew no girls except my sister's friends; I attended only two or three parties in my school-days but didn't enjoy them particularly. I was too busy for that sort of thing—too busy even to get into mischief!

I might go much further and recite how at thir-

ty I married a young woman who broadened my interests and gave me the benefit of her wider social experience and a sympathy and encouragement without which I should never have done the things which have won me the most praise. She has eased my burdens in all ways, and made it possible for me to accomplish what any one with the slightest discernment would have said on my twenty-first birthday I could never do. I beg to express to Vassar College my heart-felt thanks for its painstaking care in educating the girl who was to be my wife. What I lacked she has in large measure supplied. It's a great comfort to have an educated woman around the house; it saves a lot of bother in looking things up in the encyclopedia or trying to dig the sense out of a stubborn piece of Latin!

Here endeth the lesson, if indeed it is a lesson. To aspiring boys and girls who are denied what we call "opportunities" I would say: Cultivate the acquaintance of healthy-minded, high-minded people. Broadly speaking it's just as easy to know interesting people as it is to know dull ones. There's hardly a community in the United States where there isn't some one of understanding mind and heart and the knowledge to help you in your pursuit of any branch of learning. Never fall into the error of thinking the world's against you, for it isn't! It's really been for your success, and all its resources are yours if you knock at the right doors.

AN AMERICAN CITIZEN

AN AMERICAN CITIZEN*

He gives you at once an impression of solidity; a person not to be jostled or pushed. Of good height and substantially built, at eighty-five he still carries himself erectly; walks with the air of a man who knows his destination and will arrive on time. The color of health is in his smooth-shaven cheeks. His smile is worth waiting for, and his laugh has the the ring of honest mirth. You feel that here is a man of cheerful yesterdays and confident to-morrows. A prosperous farmer you might say, in town to sell cattle; or if you met him in a seaport you might think: here is a fine type of the mariner, a retired captain perhaps, still capable of going down to the sea in a ship which he will most certainly carry to its destination and bring back to the home port in safety. Such a man is Lucius B. Swift, an American citizen.

In a vote conducted a few years ago by an Indianapolis newspaper to determine the ten greatest citizens of the Hoosier Commonwealth my hero did not, I believe, receive a single ballot. And this is not

* The subject of this paper died, July 3, 1929, when these pages were in the press.

surprising. His achievements are not of the sort that speak strongly to the popular imagination. Nothing spectacular: no loud trumpetings, no fireworks; unknown indeed, even by sight, to a large majority of the inhabitants of the city where he has lived for nearly fifty years. Money has never figured importantly in his scheme of things; if it had, he might be rich. His ideals of what constitutes a fame worth the winning are not those of that considerable number of persons who are convinced that piling up money is the main business of life. But I feel that my hero has arrived, though not by the usual means of transportation or acclaimed in the terminology of the heralds of success; yet, somehow, he has attained an altitude that makes it necessary for us to lift our eyes a bit if we would rightly see him.

I shall not commit the indiscretion of attempting to estimate the number of American citizens who always put their country first; but I shall say without a moment's hesitation that Lucius B. Swift is entitled to sit in the front row of any gathering of such patriots. And if an investigation should be made to disclose just how many of those present really had made tangible and concrete sacrifices for their country's good and for the good of humanity, I am sure that my hero would be singled out for special praise, though he would be deeply embarrassed to find himself thus marked for attention.

So far as my contemplation of the human species has gone, Mr. Swift is unique. I have never

known a man who would risk so much for a cause as he. A foolish man, it may be said, to have spent so much time working for the public interest where there was not the slightest chance that he would be thanked for it; where, in fact, in most cases, he laid himself open to abuse or ridicule in undertaking disagreeable tasks which were, as he often heard, none of his business. Herein lies the admirable, the distinguishing thing about him: a conviction, deeply inbred in his nature, that democracy presupposes the sincere interest and devoted service of every individual, and that the public business is every citizen's concern.

I picture him as a serious, earnest, plodding boy in his early years spent on the farm in Orleans County, New York, where he was born; and we may be sure that he made the most of his opportunities at the Yates Academy, less than a mile away, where he laid the foundations of his education. He is directly descended from William Swyft, yeoman, who reached America in about 1630 and was a proprietor in the Colony of Massachusetts Bay. He built him a house at Watertown near Cambridge and when the land was divided got his share. In 1637 he moved to Cape Cod, bought land near Sandwich and established a farm which is now owned and occupied by one of his descendants. Thus William Swyft, yeoman, was a man of importance in his day and, quite conceivably, had a vision of the new nation that was to be.

A great deal of American history had passed into the blood of Lucius B. Swift when as a lad he began to hear of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and the bitter controversies of the 'fifties centering at last in the name of Lincoln. At the first call for troops Lucius, then sixteen, enlisted, but after drilling for many weeks was rejected because of his youth. His company went away without him; whereupon he borrowed money from a neighbor to carry him to its camp in Maryland, where by a patriotic fiction his age was put down as eighteen and he was accepted. I shall say, without the slightest fear of contradiction, that this is the first and only time in the course of his life that Lucius B. Swift ever lent himself to duplicity. I had known Mr. Swift ten years before I learned that he had served three years as a private and non-commissioned officer in the Civil War, and then the fact was mentioned casually, that he might testify to the spirit of democracy that animated the men in the ranks.

I doubt whether any other soldier in that war saw it with quite Swift's detachment. The attitude and demeanor of his comrades interested him; he weighed and considered the merits of his commanders—saw the whole business from the view-point of a serious lad capable of understanding that he was participating in a great episode of history. In a paper he prepared several years ago, Mr. Swift gave his impressions as an enlisted man

of life in the army just before the battle of Chancellorsville. By this time he was a seasoned soldier, with battles in the Valley of Virginia against Stonewall Jackson, sixteen weeks in Southern prisons, and two winter campaigns behind him. The end of the second day at Chancellorsville saw him again Jackson's prisoner, followed by a magical parole from Libby Prison after twelve days. He writes:

"On the evening of Sunday, April 26th, the order was issued to march next morning, each man to carry eight days' rations and sixty rounds of cartridges; three days' rations and forty rounds were the usual load. Next morning each man was left to judge for himself the amount of food which would last him eight days. I counted three meals a day, with three hard-tacks and one slice of bacon for each meal. I therefore carefully arranged in my haversack seventy-two hard-tacks, twenty-four slices of bacon, twenty-four tablespoonsful of coffee and the same number of sugar, a quart cup, a spoon, a towel, a comb and soap. In my knapsack I had one suit of underclothing, one pair of socks, and a blanket, and my overcoat was rolled in my piece of a dog-tent and strapped on the outside. The march began, the 11th corps now under General Howard taking the lead, and then we followed and after us came the 5th corps under General Meade. This was the flanking column. We were now 40,000 strong. Our route

was west up the Rappahannock. After a few miles began the usual casting off of winter surplus, which always occurred on the first spring march and the road was strewn with overcoats, blankets and articles of every kind to lighten the load. The dogwood was in blossom and the grass was green in the fields, but there were no signs of cultivation; the country was sleeping, waiting for the war to cease. We felt well and marched easily. There was in my company a sprinkling of all kinds of spicy Irishmen and a few Germans. The rest were mostly American farmer boys like myself and included twenty school-teachers. With such a combination there was no lack of conversation and jokes, and the march was not always dull plodding. To a great extent officers and men were school and village comrades. The officers of my regiment, as a rule, were men of substance and character at home and were respected by us. Our colonel was a real father to the regiment and our other officers, although often our schoolmates and boy companions and but a single remove from actual comradeship now, were yet officers having the right to command, and no enlisted man ever for a moment trespassed upon that right. Our captain often urged the sergeants to keep a line between themselves and the other men, but we could not bring ourselves to do it with old schoolmates, and when off duty we were simply comrades with them. But on duty, the matter was different; we expected

to be obeyed without demur and I never knew of but one case of disobedience."

All this was discipline, preparation for other tasks that were to engage his interest. Honorably discharged in June, 1865, Sergeant Swift, having, in a manner of speaking, already taken his postgraduate course in the school of war, took up what was by contrast the rather prosaic business of completing his preparation for college. He had saved something from his army pay, and on his discharge in June he went back to school, at the same time assisting in the labor of the home farm. He chose the University of Michigan as his college, it being at that time one of the few American institutions that did not require Greek, which he lacked. He was graduated from Michigan in the class of 1870 and returned to Medina, near the home farm, where he spent two years in a law office. Having left the university in debt, he decided to teach until the debt was paid. The authorities of his alma mater recommended him for appointment as teacher in the public schools of LaPorte, Indiana. There in due course he became superintendent, and in 1876 he married Miss Mary Ella Lyon, a graduate of Elmira College, whom he had brought to LaPorte to join his teaching staff. Meanwhile Mr. Swift put in his leisure reading law. By 1879 the Swifts, by their joint labor, had accumulated twenty-five hundred dollars. They removed

to Indianapolis, where Mr. Swift passed the examination for admission to practise in the United States courts. He knew only one person in the Hoosier capital, the state superintendent of public instruction. His receipts for the first year were thirty-five dollars. In the second year he did much better and felt encouraged to hang on. Mrs. Swift taught in the high school for a year and then became, and continues to be, her husband's self-effacing co-worker, as zealous in public service as he.

In those days the bar of Indianapolis was unexcelled in the West, numbering among its distinguished members Benjamin Harrison, William H. H. Miller, John M. Butler, John T. Dye, William P. Fishback, Joseph E. McDonald, Thomas A. Hendricks and Conrad Baker. Indianapolis society at that time was rather a tight corporation. It counted for much if one could boast pioneer ancestors or at least had lived on Hoosier soil through the Civil War and been identified with the valient host that upheld the Union under the banner of the war governor, Oliver P. Morton. It was not easy for any newcomer without social or business connections to get a foothold. But the clients who began to find Mr. Swift in Room 2, Hubbard Block, clung to him. Many of them were Germans, who liked his industry and forthright speech and the care he brought to even the smallest commission. Note here this fact, that as his list of clients lengthened, those who

brought him the most business were Germans, for we shall come back to this.

It was the way of the Swifts to make haste slowly. They lived for eight years in three rooms, where Mrs. Swift did her own housework in addition to assisting at the office. Before I knew them I marked the couple in their goings and comings in our streets, accompanied usually by a dog that spent the day in the law office. Sometimes there was a market-basket, too, and books. Lucius B. Swift's name adorned the same door in the Hubbard Block till the building was torn down; and the story-and-a-half cottage on a side street where they still live has been their home for forty years. If you pass that way you will know the place by the vines and flowers that all but hide the house.

Fierce partizanship, a characteristic of the Hoosiers from the days of Tippecanoe and Tyler too, has always made it more comfortable for an Indiana man to align himself with one or the other of the political parties. This is emphasized in the case of a lawyer, who may be assisted in developing a practise by participating in party affairs and gaining an office that will widen his acquaintance and create business contacts. Politics had been a subject much discussed in Mr. Swift's boyhood on the New York farm. Horace Greeley's *Tribune* was the family newspaper, and youthful interest in the slavery issue had been visualized for impressionable youth

by the occasional appearance at the back door of the Swift home of a fugitive slave. Swift, the schoolteacher and Civil War veteran, was disposed to take his politics seriously. He was influenced by the reading of the *New York Evening Post,* and *The Nation,* then conducted by E. L. Godkin, and *Harper's Weekly* under George William Curtis's editorship. Definite ideals of politics took form in his mind, strengthened by criticism of Grant's two administrations, and the scandals of the Tweed ring in New York. Bossism, plunder, the bestowal of offices upon faithful henchmen, struck him as wholly irreconcilable with the spirit and promise of American institutions. It occurred to him that the nation he had carried a musket to preserve might still have some work for him to do.

While traditionally a Republican, he had done a good deal of thinking about politics when in 1884 Blaine was nominated for the presidency. To live in Indianapolis and affiliate with the Mugwumps was not calculated to promote a newcomer's fortunes either professionally or socially. The animosities left by the Civil War were still so bitter that to be a Democrat was a social disqualification, but to be a Mugwump was to be "queer"—at best an object of amused or cynical curiosity. It may be said of the Indiana Republicans who bolted the Republican presidential nomination in 1884 that they were fit though few. Mr. Swift was of that com-

pany, and he established enduring friendships with men he was to be associated with in other contests. Indiana rocked under the furious struggle. It was in that battle that Mr. Swift first displayed his fighting qualities as a civilian. He became chairman of the Indiana Mugwump Committee of One Hundred, and gave time sorely needed for his own affairs to assist in defeating Blaine. I find in one of his speeches a particular emphasis laid upon Cleveland's promises with respect to the merit system, a matter which had already attracted Mr. Swift. An address he delivered before the Freidenker Verein of Indianapolis, January 8, 1885, was, I believe, the first public utterance on this subject in Indiana. It was a vigorous and effective discussion of the spoils system in American politics, and it is not surprising that Horace White should have brought it to the attention of Carl Schurz and George William Curtis, and that Curtis should have remarked that it was the best thing he had seen on the subject, adding: "Isn't it strange that the cause should take root in Indiana?" It was strange indeed; stranger even than Mr. Curtis knew!

While watching Cleveland's struggle with the importunate job-hunters, very hungry and very thirsty by reason of their long exclusion from federal office, Mr. Swift addressed himself to the business—which was not strictly his business any more than it was that of any other citizen—of exposing

the evil features of the management of the Indiana benevolent institutions. These were then operated under laws which made spoils of the jobs and gave the contracts to political favorites. There was now an Indiana Civil Service Reform Association, and under its auspices the Indiana Hospital for the Insane was subjected to a merciless scrutiny.

Having read himself out of the Republican party by supporting Cleveland, Mr. Swift did not hesitate to arouse the ire of the Indiana Democracy by showing in what manner the party was using the hospital to strengthen the party machinery. A Republican legislature was not averse to laying bare Democratic iniquity, and an investigation was ordered. Mr. Swift, without pay, gathered and produced before a committee of the senate testimony in support of the charges. The committee's report, with this evidence, made a volume of one thousand three hundred and thirty-five pages! Not only was there a plain showing of favoritism and dishonesty as to contracts but there were cases of drunkenness and immorality among the attendants; helpless patients had been beaten and taunted by their guardians and rotten food was served to them. Mr. Swift spent three weeks, working day and night, presenting the evidence to the committee. This investigation initiated the processes by which the Indiana benevolent institutions were taken out of politics and established upon a business and humanitarian basis.

Apart from the satisfaction of performing thoroughly and effectively a public duty, with resulting permanent benefit to his state, Mr. Swift got nothing for his meddlesomeness except, he once remarked to me with his characteristic chuckle, the loss of one valued client, a business man who had been one of the favored contractors!

President Cleveland, with the best intentions in the world, was unable to protect the classified service; and in September, 1886, we find Mr. Swift writing a pamphlet of fifty-three pages in small type, setting forth the manner in which the Pendleton civil-service law was being evaded in Indiana. It may here be said of Mr. Swift's speeches and pamphlets that they are excellent reading. For direct straightforward narrative the literary student would have difficulty in finding their equal. When he attacked the management of the Indianapolis post-office in the first Cleveland administration he had, as usual, fortified himself with facts. When, among other things, he stated in Document No. 2 of the papers of the Indiana Civil Service Reform Association that a job had been found in the post-office for a man under indictment for a felony, he did not merely make a statement: he presented the record of the criminal court to prove it. When he declared that, owing to the reduced efficiency of the post-office, sacks of mail were let lie undistributed so long that the rats ate into them, he knew what he

was talking about. A difficult adversary is a man like Swift, who never loses his temper; who, with no motive but to render an honest public service, acts on the principle that a public office is a public trust; who is unmoved by criticism and goes tranquilly on his way, mildly amused when men inquire just what he expects to gain by projecting himself into matters which clearly are none of his business —such a man is indeed puzzling and disturbing to those who view with alarm the intrusion of idealism into politics.

Owing to the tremendous pressure for place, Cleveland had been unable to fulfil his pre-election promises as to the merit system, and in 1888 Mr. Swift supported General Harrison in the hope that the Republicans would stand for a stricter enforcement of the existing civil-service laws. His share in the fight on Blaine had made his name known to the leading Eastern Independents, who were not without curiosity as to the gentleman who had now begun at Indianapolis the publication of the *Civil Service Chronicle,* a journal conducted without profit or the hope of profit. They invited Mr. Swift to Baltimore to a conference of men interested in elevating the tone of American politics. It was then that he first met Theodore Roosevelt, in the office of Charles J. Bonaparte. This was the beginning of a cordial and intimate friendship that continued to the end of Roosevelt's life. Roosevelt was appointed

to the Civil Service Commission by Harrison, and in 1889 visited Indianapolis at Swift's request to investigate the conduct of the post-office. On this occasion Roosevelt had luncheon with the Swifts in their cottage on Fourteenth Street, and Mrs. Swift cooked the meal.

The hope of the reformers centered again in Cleveland after his reelection in 1892, and in a long letter to Swift, dated November 28, 1893, Roosevelt wrote:

"I had a talk with the President the other day. It was mostly, however, about the disagreements in the commission: but I am bound to say that the President, on the whole in the conversation, proved much more amenable to reason as regards civil service-reform matters than President Harrison ever did. I personally never felt the hope, that so many reformers did that President Cleveland would make a radical departure in favor of the reform. I thought that as regards the non-classified service he would do just about what has proved to be just about the case. President Cleveland is himself, I think, a much stronger friend of the reform than President Harrison but his party is much more hostile to it than was the Republican party, (I mean of course, the politicians who represent the parties here in Washington and elsewhere) and in consequence the net outcome has been very much the same in the two cases.

Cleveland goes rather ahead of his party but does not think well enough of the reform to be willing to go so far ahead as to in any way jeopardize his party standing. Harrison, on the other hand, did not care to go ahead at all; he merely wished to keep abreast of his party in this respect; and so, as I said before, he and Cleveland stand about on the same plane in the matter."

But, in spite of this see-saw, Mr. Swift continued at his work of arousing sentiment favorable to the merit system, which was never, it must be said, a popular reform. Whenever opportunity offered, he delivered his lecture on American Feudalism, illustrating his points with concrete instances of the destructive results of the abuse of political power in Indiana and other states. Meanwhile he kept constantly in touch with Roosevelt, Bonaparte, Richard Henry Dana, and other eastern reformers.

I am quoting the following letter , dated April 27, 1895, because it not only shows a charming side of Roosevelt's character but shows his appreciation of the fact that his Indiana friend was a man of sympathy and understanding, willing to stand up and be shot at for a cause he believed to be right. Mr. Swift had written to express his regret that Roosevelt had resigned from the Civil Service Commission to become police commissioner in New York, and Roosevelt replied from Washington:

"No letter that I have received about my change to New York has pleased me as much as yours, for you are the only correspondent who has understood how I felt about the Civil Service Commission here. I have for six years given all my energy and all my heart to the work. I can honestly say that I think I have accomplished something, and that the cause has made during those six years far more progress from the moral than even from the material side, though the latter, as shown by the figures in the increase of the classified service themselves, is sufficiently great. Now, I entirely share your belief that the Commission must not be dependent upon any one man. In the first place, I think the whole spirit of the Commission has changed. Mr. Proctor has been on with me a year and a half. He is as high-minded and upright a man as I ever met, and our methods and desires are identical. I know that he will continue the work when I am gone precisely as he and I have carried it on while I was here. I can't help believing that any new appointee or appointees will do the same. I am continually receiving letters from men who say that they don't see how the Commission will get along without me; that I am essential to it, etc. In the first place no man is essential. There are always plenty to fill his place; and secondly, I think it unhealthy to encourage a feeling that a given man is all-important.

"As for what I can do in New York I confess

I feel rather doubtful. The legislature has refused to pass the police bills which it ought to have passed, and I haven't any certain knowledge of how much power I will have. Of course very much depends also upon who my colleagues are. Then I fear that the reformers, in following the lead of Dr. Parkhurst, may expect too much. There are certain evils which I fear cannot possibly be suppressed in a city like New York in our present stage of existence. I shall do my best to find out how to minimize them and make them least offensive, but more than this I fear cannot be done. As for my own course, I am, as you know, in national matters a strong Republican, and differ from most civil-service reformers, I think, in being an advocate of a vigorous foreign policy; but as Police Commissioner I am sure I do not have to say that I will be quite incapable of considering any question of politics in the execution of my duty, whether in the appointment or removal of a man, or in the adoption of a line of policy.

"Pray remember me warmly to Mrs. Swift, and again let me thank you heartily and sincerely for your letter, which I shall keep."

It is apparent from the tone of Roosevelt's frequent letters to the gentleman in Room 2, Hubbard Block, that these two men, so unlike in temperament, antecedents and training, had formed for each other the warmest admiration. Later, on oc-

casions when Roosevelt visited Indiana and was overwhelmed by the "thunder of the captains and the shouting," I was amused to remember that Swift was the first man in the state to know him and rightly appraise his qualities. During his years in the White House, whenever Roosevelt wanted absolutely fair and just judgments of Indiana men who sought preferment, he consulted the unassuming, plain-spoken gentleman in Indianapolis. Mr. Swift, with no axes to grind, would, with the slightest encouragement, tell the truth!

Once an Indiana congressman had been at great pains to keep Mr. Swift's name off the list of prominent Hoosiers who were to meet the President, on one of the occasions when Roosevelt paid a visit to Indianapolis. But on the train the President remarked to Vice-President Fairbanks that he very much wished to see his old friend Swift, of whom he spoke with characteristic heartiness. A telegram was immediately dispatched, inviting Mr. Swift to the Fairbanks residence. There the congressman and other leading Republicans saw the President greet Swift with a cordiality the least bit dismaying in view of the fact that the modest attorney—a "snivel-service reformer"—was a rank outsider who didn't speak the Indiana Republican language at all! In vigorous fashion the President said in a tone audible throughout the room: "There's no time to talk here. I shall be in Oyster Bay shortly; I want

you to come down to see me as soon as you can conveniently make the trip!"

Mr. Swift was not to remain an unhonored prophet in the land of his adoption. His fellow citizens began to respect him even where they continued to be puzzled by his sturdy independence, his bothersome stirring up of things that had previously been permitted to pass as part of the inevitable routine of politics.

In his quiet determined way he was establishing in Indiana a new standard of political service and patiently but stubbornly insisting upon its acceptance. Patriotism, in his view, is not wholly an affair of gunpowder, but, rightly interpreted, offers its daily opportunities and duties to all lovers of good government. As one of the chief protagonists of the civil-service cause he may be pardoned for pointing with satisfaction to the fact that when he became interested in the subject in 1883 there were only fourteen thousand positions in the classified service; now there are four hundred thousand. The volumes of the *Civil Service Chronicle* (there's a set in the Harvard Library) are mighty interestin' readin' for the student of American politics.

In a modest way the Swifts prospered. Their circle widened slowly, but it embraced the people of the community best worth knowing. It was an honor to be bidden to dine, or to come for Sunday-morning breakfast, in the Fourteenth Street cot-

tage. You were sure to find there interesting people and stimulating talk. A cheerful outlook on life has always distinguished the Swifts, but at their table and at their fireside the serious problems of life and society and the trend of world affairs have never been neglected. The breadth of their interests is indicated by a few names of distinguished visitors to Indiana who have enjoyed their hospitality—Julia Marlowe, Carl Schurz, Charles J. Bonaparte, Richard Henry Dana, Professors Taussig of Harvard and Farnham of Yale, and Colonel Henry Lee Higginson. With all their keen interest in public affairs the Swifts kept young and they have always been particularly hospitable to ambitious young men and women.

While Mr. Swift never figured in spectacular cases, he established on a solid basis a good law practise. His participation in politics served to plant him in public esteem as a man of absolute integrity. There was never any malice in his proddings of the incapable or corrupt; to those of us who have known him long he is endeared by a certain sweetness of temper and a delightful simplicity.

Never wasting ammunition or shooting merely to attract attention, he has through all his years in our town stood up stubbornly for clean politics and honest public service. When in 1899 a street-railway franchise was to be granted, he published a pamphlet on the subject warning the people against

yielding their rights without an adequate return. He was right in his warning, though few realized it then. His protest passed unheeded, and his fellow townsmen are the poorer for their heedlessness.

In the first Bryan campaign he was at once active, speaking and writing against silver. He asked to be assigned to small meetings in country districts, where he could maintain a conversational tone in discussing his subject and invite and answer questions. He gave his whole time to the campaign. The receipts of his law office between Bryan's nomination and election day were exactly ten dollars!

When the German legions started across Belgium in 1914, Mr. Swift grew restless, and before the sinking of the *Lusitania* he saw clearly that the struggle was not one of nations but an assault upon democracy. The attitude of men of German birth or descent in America in upholding the German cause aroused his indignation and he wrote an essay, a calm consideration of the war in the light of German history. This, read before the Indianapolis Literary Club and elsewhere in 1916, was widely circulated as a pamphlet. Like all of Mr. Swift's utterances, this address contained no abuse; there was no calling of names; his information was drawn largely from German sources. His utterances were resented by his many German friends; the more influential of his German clients immediately withdrew their business. Only a few intimate friends

knew of this, as it has never been Swift's way to whimper or covet the martyr's crown. He was more hurt by the severing of old ties of friendship than by the shrinking of his practise. A number of men who shared his feeling that Germany was wrong and that America "slept a base sleep beside an idle spear," while all civilization was menaced, gave him a dinner in 1916. Roosevelt sent the following letter:

"I very sincerely wish that I could be present at the dinner in honor of Lucius B. Swift on May 2nd. Mr. Swift has combined to a peculiar degree the qualities we like to think of as typical of American citizenship at its best. I have never met in public or private life a more entirely fearless and disinterested foe of every form of political corruption. Moreover, unlike many reformers of fearlessness and zeal, he has always kept a sane and well-balanced judgment. Recently he has been fighting against what is even a more deadly foe to this country than political corruption, for he has been fighting against the peculiar baseness of moral reason which, under the guise of hyphenated Americanism, has been attacking what is best and most necessary in our national heritage. There has been an organized anti-American propaganda, very powerful politically and even financially; and against this Mr. Swift has warred fearlessly, at a time when

most men held their peace. I wish I could be present at the dinner in his honor."

When America entered into the war, Mr. Swift volunteered for service and was made chairman of the District Board at Indianapolis, a court of appeals for thirty-seven local draft boards. It was like him to take the difficult job seriously, giving to it long hours in a conscientious effort to deal justly with every case. In 1919 Mr. Swift was offered a place on the Sanitary Commission at Indianapolis, a board of three members about to erect a sewage-disposal plant for the city at a cost of two and a half million dollars. Having satisfied himself that the board was designed to do its work without political interference, and that the law protected the members from the ax of the spoilsman, he accepted. In 1921 the General Assembly added the collection of ashes and garbage to the duties of the board.

The work of collectors of garbage and ashes was clumsily and wastefully done. The city was getting about six hours' service for eight hours' pay. Nearly every employee was a small politician protected by some bigger one. After a long battle the department was placed on an efficient and economical basis and, having survived many assaults, it remains to-day conspicuous throughout the country for its excellent service. Mr. Swift served on the board four years and nine months and during that

time no man was fired or hired for political reasons. The politicians, of course, resented the loss of their patronage and when Mr. Swift's term expired, and he could only be reappointed with the support of the mayor and two other members of the board, which was not forthcoming, he retired. At a time when a newly elected mayor was seeking some way of getting rid of the objectional commissioner Mr. Swift issued this statement to the public:

"I have other work suspended that I would rather do; and I could resign and have peace. But the law does not intend that a commissioner shall resign in the middle of his term because a mayor comes demanding an opportunity to turn the department into a political nest and I won't do it. Besides, for more than thirty years I have fought against using the civil service to pay political or personal debts, and I will not now turn my back upon my professions and by resigning aid the mayor-elect to beat the law and complete his Tammanyization of the entire civil service of the city."

Although bitter onslaughts had been made upon the non-political operation of the department Mr. Swift had so demonstrated the superiority of efficient service that this branch of the city government is now conducted on the lines he laid down, and trained efficient employees, thrown out at in-

tervals after Mr. Swift left the board, have been restored to their old places.

I shall not incur the wrath of the subject of this sketch by pointing to him with a fine gesture as an example worthy of all emulation. In his long life he has cared as little for praise as for blame. He was pleased, though, when in 1919 he was recalled to his alma mater to receive the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws in recognition of his unselfish and untiring efforts in behalf of clean politics. Here is a man who has never sought the easier way or evaded a responsibility. A full life, a life of usefulness, void of low aims or mean ambitions. After years of conflict he remains an optimist—the cheeriest man I know.

"I have no complaints about anything," he said the other day; "if I had to go to-morrow it would be all right. I've had a mighty good time!"

STAY IN YOUR OWN HOME TOWN

STAY IN YOUR OWN HOME TOWN

I LIKE my own state and my own town. I can prove almost anything in the whole range of human experience by the history of Center Township, Marion County, Indiana. If I don't find what I want in Indianapolis, it's only a step over to Crawfordsville, where I was born, and I'm sure to meet some man on Main Street who will give me the right answer to whatever it is I want to know.

If I were stranded almost anywhere in Indiana and waited on the station platform, somebody would be pretty sure to come along who would trust me for the price of a ticket home. All these things add to the comfort and satisfaction of life. There's a vast luxury in living where the folks know you.

I have not clung to my own state from necessity or compulsion. Once I did go away and try to adjust myself to a new environment, but the virulence of my nostalgia nearly killed me and I only saved myself by putting in my leisure writing a book about Indiana. I have refused a good many jobs, including a place of some dignity in the diplomatic service and some very pretty editorial portfolios, simply because, as I say, I like my state and my

town and my home folks, and I never leave for protracted periods without being haunted by a fear that the Joneses' cow may die and I not be there to offer the conventional condolences. Home remains a word of power, even in these restless times. "There are no stars so lovely as Edinburgh street lamps," wrote Stevenson in exile.

If I had gone to New York when I was twenty-one, I should probably now be a sour rewrite man or the compiler of obituaries and statistical tables on some newspaper, or the old fellow around the shop to whom questions are referred as to when Hancock ran for President or who was Secretary of the Navy in Cleveland's second administration. I should have been a forlorn croaking frog in a big puddle, and if I had tried to write a book it would have been a fizzle. The consciousness of the size of the human herd in a metropolis, the numbing sense of the sharpness of competition, would have killed any ambition I might have had. If I had deserted the familiar "back drop" of my early environment for new scenes, I should have been a pilgrim and a stranger wherever I landed to the end of my days.

There is probably a real value in living where, if you are seized with a passion to write, you may gaze upon other writers, and there was no lack of such literary inspiration in Indiana in my youth. Wallace wrote *Ben Hur* under the beech trees in his front yard at Crawfordsville; in the same town

Maurice Thompson was one of the best known contributors to periodical literature; James Whitcomb Riley of Greenfield, Hancock County, was becoming known in the streets of Indianapolis and was taking friendly note of Booth Tarkington and other youngsters who felt a yearning toward the inky trade. Charles Major was practising law at Shelbyville and girding his loins to write *When Knighthood Was in Flower.* And there were others.

It is foolish to generalize, but in the long run I think a writer serves himself best by sticking to his own soil. It was well demonstrated by Mark Twain and Bret Harte that early impressions can be kept alive a long way from their originating point, but these are exceptional cases. Moreover, Harte's best work was done before he left California, and Mark Twain was by nature a citizen of the world. Tarkington wanders a great deal, but Thanksgiving always finds him carving turkey in his home town where "Penrod" lives. Albert Beveridge's monumental *Life of John Marshall* is the sound American document it is, because it was produced in his Indianapolis home, within an easy walk of fields tamed by pioneers who knew what the Constitution was all about.

Literature does not, however, offer the most fortunate department of human activity in which to speculate as to the desirability of staying at home among your own folks, where you don't have to ex-

plain yourself; or, if you had an aunt who poisoned her husband or an uncle who bore an evil reputation for robbing the widow and orphan, it isn't held against you if you behave yourself. The young lawyer is certainly at an advantage when he opens an office in his own town. The advantage is increased if he has gone to college in his own state even though he has gone elsewhere for his professional training. His classmates who have entered the same profession are able to help him in practical ways. He is among people who know his language and are anxious to be proud of him.

The boy who walks out of a small-town high school confronted by the necessity of finding a job can usually get an audience with the important men of his community. It isn't necessary for him to fill in a blank and give references to an unfeeling employment desk. The head of the bank, the factory or the store probably knows his folks and may even have been observing him with a kindly eye with a view to trying him out. There are qualities and abilities that require room for their perfect demonstration, but in so far as I may lay claim to any knowledge of human nature I should say that it's safer to pull the rabbit out of the hat on a small stage first.

Most of the inspirational literature with which we are deluged is dangerous stuff. I mean the kind of thing that undertakes to prove that if

psychoanalyzed the twelve-dollar-a-week grocery clerk at Griggsby's Station may dash to the great city, astound some great financier by pointing out the virgin market for collar buttons in Timbuktu, and at once take rank with the great industrial kings. The small-town boys don't need psychoanalyzing; their surest bet is to avoid the Elite Poolroom and buckle in to the first job they can get.

Many are called and few chosen and the high gods have always been capricious in handing down their special favors. Every one knows—my own list is a long one—men who have left small towns for successful careers in large cities. These instances always kindle the imagination. I have one friend, born in Boone County, Indiana, who draws a salary of seventy-five thousand dollars a year in New York. He began life as a telegraph messenger in Indianapolis. Another, who began as a newsboy on the streets of the Hoosier capital, has, at forty-two, by his pluck and business genius rolled up a fortune of ten million dollars. But these cases prove nothing beyond the exceptional ability of those men, who missed no round of the ladder on their upward climb.

My list of the unlucky ones who bucked the metropolis and failed is much longer. Every western town has a few representatives in New York who lie in wait for old friends from home on whom to effect a light and graceful touch. These failures

invariably remark with a sigh, "New York—it's the only place!" And it is—the best possible place in which to fail because no one is likely to know it or care particularly if you go hungry.

My trouble is, of course, that I am an irredeemable hick. With hicks generally I find myself greatly in sympathy. None of my forebears ever lived in a town as large as Indianapolis, which isn't half as agreeable and comfortable a town to live in nowadays as in the olden golden days when a stuffed bear on the sidewalk advertised Bamberger's hat and fur store in Washington Street and a citizen who set up a two-horse carriage was sure to be warned against extravagance by his banker.

"Love danger," advised Zarathustra, but Bill Hohenzollern tried it on rather a magnificent scale and is now biting his nails in Holland. There is still great merit in the simple life, and the whiskered philosophers of the cracker barrel are not all fools. Motoring across Minnesota, it was with a thrill that I found the guideposts pointing to Rochester. I changed my course to inspect what is probably the most famous town of its size in all America. The Mayo brothers stayed right there in their home town and rubricated it on the map. There's plenty of work to be done in any small town. Young men and women might do a fine job in almost any town of five thousand by making it so well-governed, clean and well-mannered that passing pil-

grims would go forth to boost it. It's a pet notion of mine that the elevation of the tone of our politics must begin in the smaller political units and that it's up to the young sons and daughters of democracy to do the job.

I like, and believe it has been for the good of my soul, the intimate contact we have in the provinces with things political. Living in a state where the political pot is always at the boiling point, I have long been puzzled by the apathy of New Yorkers about the business of government. When an election is impending, one may hear the contest referred to, but always with a curious bewildered helplessness. I have asked gentlemen in highly respectable clubs about the municipal situation in New York only to be met with a reproachful stare, as if I had carried a deceased kitten into the room.

A banker who had lived in New York for forty years once asked me diffidently if I knew a certain western senator who, he thought, could assist in advancing a piece of legislation in which he was interested. He had never known a senator—not even the representatives of his own state. The fact that I wired the senator and got a prompt reply gave this gentleman a highly exaggerated idea of my importance. There was, of course, nothing significant in the fact that a senator answered a mere citizen's telegram, for in the provinces we all know whether our senators wear "galluses" and sugar

their lettuce and we act accordingly. I have touched various social circles in New York, but never one that included a person of the slightest political importance. This strikes me as odd; it isn't healthy. What's America for if it isn't for politics and keeping our statesmen humble? Once I got off the train at Emporia, Kansas, and Bill White sent for Henry Allen to come over from Wichita and he got in some other citizens who were good spouters and within four hours they had buried most of the nation's greatest statesmen. Great stuff—the sort of thing that renews your confidence in the old U. S. A. as a vigorous going concern.

The United States of America somehow seems remote as I walk the streets of New York, and lately I experienced in Chicago the same feeling of being an alien. This, of course, is a symptom of my incurable hickness—a sort of claustrophobia. In a big city I feel as I used to when my grandmother took me to hear the Boy Preacher who declaimed nightly a terrifying peroration all about the coming of the Pale Rider who was going to make it hot for wicked boys like me. George Meredith spoke of London as "the burial place of the individual man." The male clerks in New York shops always seem to me perfunctory, suppressed, afraid of something or somebody. I prefer to buy my neckties of clerks at home who call me Nick and tell me about their babies and how Uncle Jim came in from Scott

County last week and brought a bushel of sheepnose apples.

The ideal place in which to live happily and comfortably in America is a town of not more than ten or twenty thousand people. There are trees in the yards, an Elks' Club and a Masonic Temple for social entertaining, and there's bound to be a country club with a weedy golf course and Saturday night jazz. Industry is represented by a flour mill, a strawboard factory, a cannery, a creamery and a flourishing brickyard, and there are sure to be a few restless young persons who yearn to make a bigger town of it and, unless the horned money devils of Main Street succeed in their earnest attempts to discourage them, are very likely to succeed.

About ninety-five per cent. of the native sons the country over are a lot better off to remain right where they start, intent upon such labors as God gives them to do, assured that if they are honest and industrious it won't be necessary at their passing for the mortician's assistants to do the pall-bearing.

SHOULD NELLIE STAY AT HOME?

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HERE indeed is a question! I write these words amid a litter of newspaper and magazine articles, reports of sermons, compilations of social statistics and solid books all discussing Woman and her status in modern civilization. If women read all that is written about them they would have time for little else. Between the saccharine sentimentalists on the one hand and ferocious destructive critics on the other, women are having a hard time of it. It is an old story that man must live his own life,—sow and reap his wild oats, go adventuring, experiment, use his brains in any way he likes and it's all part of his normal development. But in many minds woman is still unemancipated —the weaker vessel, a helpless creature for whom a special code of conduct must be prescribed. But Nellie, our average American woman, refuses to yield to the present passion for standardizing everything and everybody—and there lies the trouble.

Nellie, light-heartedly tripping down the street in apparel shockingly insufficient in the eyes of her Aunt Mary, is vaguely conscious of the great amount of anxiety she is causing, but her appetite

continues good in spite of the melancholy predictions as to her destiny—a destiny which the least gallant of her critics declare to be the roaring flames of eternal torment so popular in the theology of yesterday. Nellie, blithe hedonist that she is, is very much a child of to-day. She finds the world a pleasant place. She is obsessed by no craze to change or regulate it. Nor is she greatly disturbed by the lamentations and gloomy prophecies of her critics. Her bobbed head deftly dodges the polemics hurled at it.

Women in all ages have come in for a vast amount of criticism. I have just read an article by a New York city magistrate who holds the American girl responsible for the corruption of the American boy. This is truly old stuff—dates from our earliest literature. "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." No doubt pre-Adamite man, if there was such an animal, held the women folks to strict accountability for his failure in the hunt, for bad weather and disorder in the cave.

"Something better than his dog, a little dearer than his horse." Kipling, more savage than Tennyson, growled that "the female of the species is more deadly than the male." Not only the poets with telling phrase but the ethnologist, the biologist, the neurologist, the social student and other lords of the lofty brow are fiercely at work analyzing wo-

man, scrutinizing her brain cells, and classifying her emotions in a praiseworthy attempt to fix her place in the grand Scheme of Things. *The Mothers,* a profound work in three volumes, has lately been published by Robert Briffault, an erudite Englishman, who solemnly announces that primitive societies were matriarchal. It appears that after all the cave man was not the monstrous tyrant of popular tradition who beat his wife for pastime, but that she, doing all the work, creating all the property known to primitive economic life, was, by the unwritten law, also its owner. In due course of evolution man shook off the yoke and took the whip into his own hand. The matriarch yielded to the patriarch. There are those who, in a cynical spirit, prophesy that the American woman is on her way to regain the power and prestige of her sister of those many centuries ago. This is an interesting subject for speculation; but it is not important. The great struggle in the past fifty years has been woman's battle for justice and equal rights. Here woman has scored heavily but the fight goes on.

Nellie, our average young woman, is only a little amused by the vast amount of trouble she is causing the wiseacres. Or, if she is unusually sensitive, her feelings are hurt by the nagging and prodding to which she is subjected. What the daughters of the cave woman did is nothing in her young life. The man who understands women has

always been a joke, as Nellie well knows. With all the up-piling literature that undertakes to analyze woman and mark out her destiny I refuse to see that she is so utterly different from man. Such differences as must be conceded are largely emotional, with a recognized physical basis. There seems to be an impression abroad in the camps of the pessimists that while man inevitably moves along with the spirit of the age, woman should lag behind. Manifestly this is a foolish notion. Nothing is more familiar than the criticism of some individual woman for not "keeping up" with her husband's progress. We should certainly have a badly balanced social order if man strode through the light while woman huddled in darkness. The average American woman is more open-minded than the average man, more hospitable to new ideas. Man's prejudices are unalterable and fixed; it is to the credit of woman, certainly not to be said in disparagement, that she will, when "shown," change her mind.

We males have an enormous conceit of our own wisdom. We like to instruct the women folks as to matters in which their ignorance is presumably profound. I know of nothing more beguiling than the sight of a strong man pontificating before a company of women as to public affairs. I enjoy this rôle myself. As my views are frequently not those of other males I become most informative and eloquent when no other member of my sex is pres-

ent. It is possible to interest women in the idea of political independence, but most men have a regular formula for meeting criticism of either of the political parties to which they belong.

The scoundrels who captured the offices are, they declare, no worse than the other scoundrels who preceded them; or it's the fault of the ignorant masses that they are misgoverned, or the primary is at fault, and there's no use in breaking with your party over some trifling instance of corruption. These reasons do not, I find, impress the feminine mind as conclusive. With her housekeeping instincts a woman wants quick action when the plumbing goes wrong or there's a screw loose in the clothes-wringer. But a man is very tolerant of the stupid or crooked municipal management that results in bad streets, a smoky atmosphere,or as happened in my home town not long ago, when a comparatively new bridge on an important thoroughfare falls down, as an incident of the general incompetence of the city government. There were a few howls, yes; but rest assured that the most important citizens—the financiers, the large industrial and commercial men—maintained a cowardly silence. They must not incur the ill-will of the dominant political powers even if taxes soared. They might want some favor, or were under obligations for favors already delivered. The adoption of the city manager plan in Indianapolis was due to the

initiative of a few high-minded patriotic citizens not conspicuous for wealth, ably supported by a host of women who deeply resented the evil name that had attached to their city. Not a good place in which to bring up children—a town whose atmosphere is foul with stories of dishonor and corruption!

Yes; the Nellies of America are to have an increasingly important part in government, not according to well-established male notions, but in a spirit of independence sharpened by righteous indignation whenever efficiency, integrity and decency are the issue. Wherever a dozen women meet for a frank discussion of the political need nearest their homes we have much more reassuring testimony to her political competence than where a woman is elected to Congress or even to a governorship. I would drop a hint to women anxious to be of service in public affairs to avoid being used by either political party merely to round up women voters as a party duty. And don't be deceived by the cheap salve of a little "recognition" where a woman is put on a ticket as a bait for the feminine vote. This is an old game first practised in the recognition of race and religious groups to strengthen a ticket. Nellie, at home or in the office, store or factory, may reach conclusions as to politics much more valuable than any she will derive by attaching herself to organizations devised for her by po-

litical managers. The assertion of her dignity and intelligence as a citizen lies not in servile obedience to masculine dictation but in forming her own opinions and letting the men worry a little as to how she intends to vote.

It's high time the Nellies of America were protesting against the disposition to treat them as freaks—exotic, neurotic parasites for whom special laws must be devised and special excuses made. Now and then some woman strikes spitefully at her own sex—usually some melancholy lady with a superiority complex; which suggests that old question, why women are not more valiant in "standing together." But here too a change is evident as woman's sex pride is strengthened by noteworthy achievements.

I have wondered why some of the national organizations of women do not create a defensive board to deal with criticisms and other matters touching the dignity of American womanhood. Certain English novelists, after profitable tours of America—entertained by women and listened to with respectful, if not enthusiastic, attention by audiences of women—have with fine gallantry dipped ink when they got safely across the water and written with noble scorn of their late patrons and hostesses. They should at least have their wrists slapped for their bad manners. I have wondered, too, that the exploitation of the American

girl by the eminent Mr. Ziegfeld of Follies renown has not drawn the fire of some organization keen to defend American womanhood from insult. The "glorification" of the American girl by Mr. Ziegfeld is for commercial purposes only. The tired business man must have his thrills and Mr. Ziegfeld his dollars. The American girl is only debased by Mr. Ziegfeld's sort of "glorification," a term used by his publicity agents with obvious cynical connotations. Beauty contests conducted for advertising purposes belong in the same category. The gleeful yelp of prudery at every remonstrance against exhibitions of nakedness in the theater neither answers nor explains.

In those good old times when we sang *Seeing Nellie Home* as we rattled back to town on a buckboard from a picnic up the river Nellie's mother was usually "waiting up." I seem to recall that there was usually a chaperon somewhere in the caravan. "Waiting up" for Nellie was a regular occupation of Nellie's mother in those days. In these times, Nellie's mother has probably been stepping out herself and may not yet have arrived, but she knows that Nellie is all right, as Nellie indubitably is. If Nellie has a job down-town her alarm clock will have her up and on her way at the right moment, no matter into what late hours she has danced.

Home! The violence of the reformers who want Nellie to stay at home calls for consideration.

A woman's place—there it is! But what would you have Nellie do at home? From her mother and the domestic science course at school she got some glimmer of an idea as to how food is cooked and clothes are made. But there is no sound reason why she should stay at home to perform such labor if she prefers to be a wage-earner.

The philosophers who would shoo Nellie home have tackled a big job. It's not Nellie they're fighting but the irresistible tide of the times. There are nine million women wage-earners in America, and these Nellies work, most of them, because they need the money. Whether impelled by necessity or preference they are entitled to the highest consideration. It must be remembered that these Nellies didn't create the conditions of modern society; their home-keeping mothers and grandmothers had precious little part in the business. Man himself, driven by economic forces, opened the doors that freed Nellie. And man has been bewildered by the tremendous energy and the mounting ambitions manifested by Nellie since she came out of the kitchen. Employed in the multiplying occupations open to her; creating new businesses; climbing mountains; exploring; shooting big game; running for office; writing books—Nellie quite naturally is bored by the senile whimper that her place is in the home. Then there's an interesting type of Nellie whose thirst for knowledge is insatiable. I am

not thinking particularly of girls whose parents send them to college but of less favored Nellies who, on their own initiative, invade the halls of learning and ask no favors as to ways and means. University extension courses and night classes conducted by various agencies meet the want of yet another type. The bachelor girl was spoken of in derision when we first began to hear of her, forty years ago, but now she's a recognized member of society. The assumption that all these activities and changes connote moral degeneracy are as ungenerous as they are false. Men are far too prone to take it for granted that any woman who works for a living is an easy prey and fair game. The romance of marriage is pretty well dispelled for any intelligent girl who watches the rising tide of divorce.

Years ago some one wrote a poem to the general effect that "woman's work is never done," and in households known to my youth it never was! My mother was an efficient person, who realized George Herbert's ideal of sweeping a room in a spirit that made the action fine. In our seven-room cottage she was always at work, sewing, filling the lamps, cooking and, at one time, giving music lessons to augment the family income. Coffee was roasted at home in the wood-burning cook stove—a tedious process, as the Java with a dash of Mocha must be inspected and stirred frequently to avoid

scorching. Saturday morning was sacred to baking, for Sunday was held in such reverence that a woman must break her back Saturday that the Sabbath might be kept holy. Incidentally my mother saw to it that my sister and I were turned out clean and neat for school and, herself a good scholar, she found time to help us with our lessons. An heroic soul, my mother!

Even with this strenuous program she did considerable reading, taught a Sunday-school class, assisted in the social affairs of her church and heard all the lecturers who came to town. Remembering her arduous days in that period of her life (comfort and ease were to come to her later) I am strongly sympathetic with the women of to-day who patronize the delicatessen shop and buy baker's bread. There is no virtue in drudgery. If Nellie, with her compact kitchenette and the many devices that lighten domestic labor, has leisure to doll up in her ready-made garments and stroll out to a movie I'm for letting her enjoy herself. The men for whom women used to slave in the kitchen rarely appreciated the home-made catsup and strawberry preserves that scented the neighborhood every summer. There is a good deal of bunk in this tear-shedding for the sanctity of the old home which, for the mother, sitting up late with the darning basket, was little less than a prison house.

There may be men who would like to chain

Nellie to the old kitchen stove, but certainly no woman who remembers those not-so-distant times would vote to return to the old order of things. And Nellie, having sniffed the air of freedom, couldn't be forced back at the point of the bayonet.

In those rather sad old yesterdays Nellie spent her evenings at home unless her parents or some young man took her out. Nowadays Nellie and her girl chum do not await the pleasure of a young gentleman admirer, but buy tickets to the theater or concert in keeping with their tastes. In this way they are able to choose their amusements without incurring irksome obligations. It's a distinct gain for civilization that woman has ceased to be a clinging vine.

I met not long ago a young woman who began her business career at fourteen as a messenger in a New York department store. She passed through all the grades—saleswoman, buyer, advertising writer—until finally she created for herself a unique business so profitable that she is able to spend four months of every year in foreign travel. We hear a great deal of captains of industry, but the Nellies who by sheer intelligence, initiative and force of character achieve success in the business world are much more admirable, for they triumph in fields which, only a little while ago, were closed to them. There must be a goodly number of women in America whose earnings run into five figures, and

it would be pretty difficult to persuade them that their talents would be better employed in the kitchen. Something after all must be left to individual preferences and necessities. If our American women prefer useful activity to a parasitic existence I don't see why we should grumble. They are not descended of the daughters of the horse-leech nor yet of the Lotophagi.

Most of the criticism of the American woman is based on superstitions as obsolete as witch-burning. Woman is not going back to her status of fifty years ago unless the male of the species is willing to go along and, as he shows no enthusiasm for such an about-face, the more graciously he accommodates himself to his sister's presence on the firing-line the happier he will be.

AMERICANS ALL

AMERICANS ALL

BACK yonder, when Hayes, Garfield and Arthur were taking their turns in the seat of the Presidents, it seemed to my youthful fancy that the Civil War, of which I heard so constantly, was the greatest incident in all history. Those years are deeply etched in my memory. Indiana, my home state, had sent two hundred eight thousand, three hundred sixty-seven volunteers into the conflict, and practically all the men with whom I came in contact had served in the Union Army. Around the post-office in Indianapolis a hero-worshipping lad could find many of the valiant upon whom to lavish admiration.

Generals were not uncommon—Benjamin Harrison, Lew Wallace, George F. McGinnis, Robert S. Foster, Fred Knefler, George H. Chapman, Abel D. Streight, Walter Q. Gresham. Good stuff for Plutarch, those men! Harrison became President and Wallace wrote *Ben Hur,* a novel read by millions, long popular on the stage and more recently flourishing as a screen production. Gresham was a Federal judge and twice a Cabinet officer. My generals were all successful in their subsequent civil

careers, but to me they always wore the glamour of romance. Nothing is so conclusive as an argument against the phobia that we might become a militaristic nation as the fact that when our wars are ended our soldiers so quickly adjust themselves to civil life. As to the War between the States, the transition was often so abrupt as to be incongruous.

General Streight enjoyed a remarkable experience as a volunteer soldier. He led a brigade on a dash into the heart of the Confederacy to destroy property and cut communications. He was getting away with it quite handsomely until that brilliant military genius, General N. B. Forrest, interrupted the proceedings. Even at that, Streight did considerable damage before Forrest stopped him, and when landed in Libby Prison he tunneled out with something over a hundred of his men and after many adventures reached the Potomac and rejoined the Union forces. Yet after these stirring experiences he returned to Indianapolis and, the most unassuming of our citizens, quite unromantically engaged in the lumber business.

While my supreme joy was in these noble generals I did not withhold my adoration from certain colonels; and two majors won my admiration by the splendor of their whiskers. (Oddly, all the Civil War majors I ever knew were whiskered men!) I presently found that the veterans who confessed to having served in the ranks talked of their

experiences much more entertainingly than the officers. At any rate their point of view was different and they had more humor. One of these was John Rankin, a printer. He had derived from his service as a volunteer a philosophy of life by which he lived. He had done a lot of thinking on the long marches and I can see now, what I didn't understand when I stood by his case in the dingy composing room—that he really had a good many of Plato's ideas.

The best story-teller in our town was Lieutenant Henry C. Adams, the star performer at all soldier gatherings. There was much scandal about pensions, and Adams, in discussing the subject, declared that he was one survivor of the war who owed the government money, because he had been given up to die with consumption when he enlisted and the army life had cured him. Those were great nights in the hall of George H. Thomas Post to which my father and mother took me for camp-fire entertainments, when stories were told and the quartet sang *Tenting on the Old Camp Ground.* My father, a private in Wallace's Eleventh Indiana Regiment for the three months' service, had changed to the artillery, become captain of the 22nd Indiana Battery, and saw hard service to the end. But he never talked of the war. Something of the horror of it had touched him profoundly; it was in his eyes to the end of his days. There was a box of his papers

in the barn and among them some orders that had been in the pocket of the commander of the battery when he was killed in the operations around Atlanta and my father succeeded to the captaincy. A tattered guidon, a saber, a dress uniform coat and a pair of gilt-fringed epaulettes were among my first playthings.

It still seems remarkable that the heroes I began to contemplate with so much satisfaction in my home town in about 1876 had been without military training when the Civil War began, or, as one of the poet Riley's characters said, "when the army broke out." Some of them had belonged to military companies, but these organizations were chiefly social and did not take seriously the science of war; and their training before going to the front was very sketchy. When Sumter was fired on they were young men, in stores and offices, still at the threshold of life. It remains a mystery how they so quickly learned "the iron game," assumed large responsibilities and acquitted themselves with distinction. War in those days was, of course, a simpler affair than now, conducted with much awkward and futile gesturing; but this makes all the more glorious the valor and fortitude of the men of the 'sixties.

Beyond my Hoosier galaxy were the great planets that revolved about Lincoln—Grant, Sherman, Thomas and Sheridan. A hero much to my taste was Custer, the dashing cavalryman, who rode

unscathed through many battles in the South only to be killed in a fight with the Indians in Montana. I used to go to the Public Library and pore over the war-time volumes of *Harper's Weekly* and *Frank Leslie's* for the joy of the pictures. The spell of enchantment was still upon me when the *Century Magazine* began serial publication of "Battles and Leaders of the Civil War," articles written by surviving officers. I was now old enough to understand something of the strategy of the campaigns and the blunders in high places that had resulted in calamitous defeats.

With the atmosphere of the community in which I lived still vibrating as to the cry of bugles, it isn't surprising that I thought of the South as an alien country that had been whipped into subjection and must be viewed with distrust, lest it again require chastisement. In those years I never heard any one speak with any tolerance or sympathy of the southern people. They were rebels. All Democrats were either rebels or copperheads. Beyond question the sympathizers with the South in all the border states had lent such aid and comfort to the enemy as they dared and in consequence were cordially hated by their neighbors. The Knights of the Golden Circle had been particularly active in Indiana and might have been much more mischievous but for the vigilance and the iron hand of Oliver P. Morton, the war governor. These animosities

were a part of the inheritance of my generation at the North. While I was still in the public schools there was a commotion because the text-book used in American history was too considerate of the South.

I was near voting age before I learned that the questions fought out between North and South ran far back in our history; that the precise nature of the union of states had been a subject of controversy from the beginning of the Republic. Men who were neither fools nor rebels had held that a dissatisfied state might withdraw from the Union at will. New England had been restive long before Webster in 1830 made his famous reply to Hayne. Andrew Jackson, militant southerner, had rattled his saber at South Carolina for threatening nullification of a Federal tariff law. "The Union—it must be preserved," announced Jackson with characteristic vigor. "I will die for the Union," he wrote to John Coffee, a Tennessee friend who had shared the fortunes of his military campaigns.

In St. Michael's Churchyard, Charleston, among the graves of many Confederate soldiers, one may read an inscription in felicitous and moving phrase to a distinguished lawyer of South Carolina, James Lewis Pettigru, who had outspokenly supported the Union and never changed his attitude. He died in 1863, while the cloud of war hung dark above his city. A man admired, loved and

honored for his abilities and his virtues, the fact that all business was suspended on the day of his funeral, and that the Charleston bar met later to pay tribute to him as an honorable man and distinguished jurist, speaks eloquently both for him and for the magnanimity of his people.

Some northern men had believed in the right of secession and some southern men had held the opposite view, both before and after slavery became the dominant political issue. I began to realize that the seed of the whirlwind had been a long time sowing. The relationship of the several states to the Federal power which had been susceptible of two interpretations had to be clarified and, deplorably, war was necessary to the permanent settlement of the question.

I was groping among such ideas as these when Henry W. Grady, editor of the *Atlanta Constitution,* delivered a speech on the New South before the New England Society in New York that thrilled the country. That was in 1886. No nobler or more heartening utterance ever came from the lips of an American. I reread it the other day with renewed admiration. No apology, no whimper; but the manly deliverance of a son of the South whose eyes were turned toward the future without regret for the past. The election of Cleveland in 1884 had witnessed the last vigorous waving of the bloody shirt. In that campaign, one of the bitterest the na-

tion has known, it was charged that if the Democrats were successful the Confederate brigadiers would again be in the saddle; the debts of the Confederacy would be paid and pensions would be forthcoming for Confederate veterans. Nothing of the kind happened. Cleveland, elected on questions remote from sectionalism, brought an era of good feeling. The southern men appointed to important places by a Democratic President proved to be soundly American, entitled to all respect and confidence. And Grady had struck a note so high and touched with so splendid a patriotism that the unforgiving "stalwarts" of the North were shamed by it. We began to realize that the perpetuation of a sectional spirit was a profitless business on both sides.

The South had not only suffered in war but had been deeply humiliated by the abuses of Reconstruction. Having whipped the Confederate States back into the Union it struck me as poor sportsmanship to continue to harass them. The high purpose of the Union could only be defeated by the persistent irritation of the vanquished. Grant had said: "Let us have peace." Not the soldiers, but politicians intent on keeping alive the old animosities made the mischief. The South, it must be said, had its irreconcilables and fire-eaters who struck back fiercely when provoked. But we began to hear more and more of the New South, and oth-

er typical southerners, following Grady, lifted their voices reassuringly and found friendly response in the North.

One of the best lectures I ever heard was General John B. Gordon's "Last Days of the Confederacy"—eloquent, graphic, and touched with a delightful humor. Colonel Henry Watterson, the distinguished Kentuckian, lecturing in the North on Lincoln, helped in the work of reconciliation. Such southern folk as I began to meet seemed quite like other Americans; there was nothing the matter with them! I became acquainted with two Confederate veterans who had moved to Indianapolis; they were perfectly orderly, law-abiding citizens. A pension attorney, knowing only that one of these gentlemen had been a soldier, pursued him for months to get his application for a pension. It amused the veteran to encourage his attentions. Finally when the attorney's pen was poised ready to fill in the papers he was flabbergasted by the applicant's smiling confession that his military service had been with Jeb Stuart's cavalry!

In my own cogitations the war of which I had heard so much took on a new aspect. Its causes became less important and interesting than the personalities of the men who had waged it. Lincoln was already immortal. I had seen Grant, Sheridan and Sherman and John A. Logan in the streets of my own city. It occurred to me that Lee, "Stone-

wall" Jackson, Joe Johnston, Albert Sidney Johnston, Longstreet and Pickett of Gettysburg were also of the fine fiber of which Americans are made. "Mighty men of valor, famous throughout the house of their fathers." I didn't change my heroes; I merely added to the list!

No doubt many boys in the South, seeing Confederate veterans and hearing the war discussed, had passed through an experience similar to mine, with the difference that while political feeling was largely responsible for my attitude, southern youth, born in the years immediately following the conflict, might well be pardoned for a bitter antagonism due to the fact that to them the story of the war was written with an iron pen upon the land itself.

Gratifying it is indeed to have lived to see the old sectional prejudices and hatreds obliterated. If any proof were necessary of the patriotism of the South it was amply given in the unquestioning response of the sons and grandsons of the old Confederacy to the call to the colors in the War with Spain and in the World War. With the portrait of my father in his uniform as one of Abraham Lincoln's soldiers before me daily, I would not have my children think in terms of disparagement or hatred of the men who fought against the flag that waves now in every part of a united Republic. I would rather have them believe that the war was inevita-

ble and that the men of the South who engaged in the long struggle were as valiant as the men of the North. If I go with them to view the Lincoln Memorial in Washington—the most beautiful monument in all the world—or if I take them to Grant's tomb and say, "Here was a great soldier of the Republic, whose iron blows saved the Union," I shall not neglect to tell them that the soldiers of the South were worthy foes.

I shall never forget a day when I stood before that recumbent statue of Lee in the chapel of Washington and Lee University at Lexington. I should be sorry for any son of a Union soldier who can view that figure without emotion. In Washington, standing by the august figure of Lincoln and glancing toward the Capitol, we thank God that we are a united people. By the Hudson we ponder the life of Grant—so amazing in its beginnings, so pitiful with early failure, so splendid at last in magnanimity. It is to be a better American to reflect upon that April day at Appomattox when two American gentlemen met to end the war. One was of undistinguished blood save as he brought it to fame, the other of Virginia's proud aristocracy. And the conqueror, so solicitous for the other's feelings, so anxious to be generous! Noble Americans, all!

A vast literature, still increasing, describes the War between the States. Its causes and the controversies over errors of judgment by the commanders

fill many volumes. There are innumerable biographies of the men of the period. Novelists, poets and playwrights have found those battle years rich in material. The debunking process has snatched the laurel from many a head. We have now what strikes me as the most comprehensive and adequate work yet produced in Stephen Vincent Benet's *John Brown's Body.* Here indeed is a great saga, a poem unique in method, vivid, quick with life and nobly just in its appraisements. It has the color and movement of a great pageant. It is a work of genius, not approached by any other writer of any other period in our history. Old John Brown is fittingly the "point of departure," but the stage is alive with characters, not only the famous but the humble. The social picture as to both sides is done with amazing skill; there are stories within the great story—interludes with swift changes of key. The effect of the whole is tremendous. Much in these pages could not have been got from other books; the poet must have sat at the feet of his elders who had tasted the smoke of those battles and tramped with the great phalanxes. It touches the sublime heights but falls into colloquialism without loss of dignity. There's no mere prettiness of phrase; no dolling up of the human beings who cross the broad stage. The characterizations of the famous are done with sure strokes:

"This Lincoln, President now by the grace of luck,
Disunion, politics, Douglas and a few speeches
Which make the monumental booming of Webster
Sound empty as the belly of a burst drum,—
Lincoln shambled in to the Cabinet meeting
And sat, ungainly and awkward. Seated so
He did not seem so tall nor quite so strange,
Though he was strange enough. His new broadcloth suit
Felt tight and formal across his big shoulders still,
And his new shiny top-hat was not yet battered
To the bulging shape of the old familiar hat
He'd worn at Springfield, stuffed with its hoard of papers.
He was pretty tired. All week the office-seekers
Had plagued him as the flies in fly-time plague
A gaunt-headed, patient horse."

Fate, we are reminded, "has a way of picking unlikely material," and we see Grant—

"Sometime brevet-captain in the old Fourth Infantry,
Mentioned in Mexican orders for gallant service
And, six years later, forced to resign from the Army
Without enough money to pay for a stateroom home.
Turned farmer on Hardscrabble Farm, turned bill-collector,

Turned clerk in the country-store that his brothers ran,
The eldest-born of the lot, but the family-failure,
Unloading frozen hides from a farmer's sleigh
With stoop-shouldered strength; whittling beside the stove,
And now and then turning to whiskey to take the sting
From winter and certain memories.

". . . A middle-aged clerk,
A stumpy, mute man in a faded army overcoat,
Who wrote the War Department after Fort Sumter,
Offering them such service as he could give
And saying he thought that he was fit to command
As much as a regiment, but getting no answer."

Yet it was he who was to become "Unconditional Surrender" Grant; and, looming larger as his star led him eastward, it was he who ended it all.

Lee, on his famed horse, Traveller, comes into the picture now and again, but most memorable is an aide-de-camp's chance view of him in the last hours of the war:

"He saw, imprinted on the yellow light
That made the tent a hollow jack-o'-lantern,
The sharp, black shadow of a seated man,

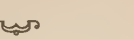
The profile like the profile on a bust.
Lee in his tent, alone.
He had some shadow-papers in his hand,
But you could see he was not reading them,
And, if he thought, you could not read his thoughts,
Even as shadows, by any light that shines.

" 'You'd know that face among a million faces,'
Thought the still watcher, 'and yet, his hair and beard
Have quite turned white, white as the dogwood-bloom
That blossomed on the way to Chancellorsville
When Jackson was alive and we were young
And we were winning and the end was near.
And now, I guess, the end is near enough
In spite of everything that we can do,
And he's alone tonight and Jackson's dead.' "

How thin the lines have grown of the Blue and the Gray! Discussions of the right and wrong of it are profitless now save for the student of law and history. But there is continuing inspiration in the thought of the men of the North and the South who acquitted themselves so nobly, with so fine a courage, who were so steadfast and patient under suffering and so brave in defeat. They enriched and strengthened the American Spirit for those of us who carry on, and they wrote new meanings and new glories into the name of our common country.

THE END

BOOKS BY MEREDITH NICHOLSON



Fiction

The Main Chance
Zelda Dameron
The House of a Thousand Candles
The Port of Missing Men
Rosalind at Red Gate
The Little Brown Jug at Kildare
The Lords of High Decision
The Siege of the Seven Suitors
A Hoosier Chronicle
Otherwise Phyllis
The Poet
The Proof of the Pudding
A Reversible Santa Claus
And They Lived Happily Ever After
The Hope of Happiness
Broken Barriers
Best Laid Schemes
Blacksheep! Blacksheep!
The Madness of May
Lady Larkspur
The Cavalier of Tennessee

Non-Fiction

Short Flights
The Hoosiers
Poems
The Provincial American and Other Papers
The Man in the Street
The Valley of Democracy
Old Familiar Faces

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